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玛丽·雪莱的生态愿景：《弗兰肯斯坦》的 生态女性主义解读

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**Mary Shelley's Ecological Vision:
Interpretation of *Frankenstein* from the
Perspective of Ecofeminism**

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摘要

玛丽·雪莱是英国浪漫主义时期著名的女作家。她创作了第一部科幻小说《弗兰肯斯坦，或现代普罗米修斯》，被文学界赞誉为最杰出的哥特式小说之一。该小说因其强大的艺术渲染力一经出版便引起无数评论家的关注。

生态女性主义的核心理论诠释了女性和自然的相似性，同时从理论高度揭示父权制社会下压迫女性和掠夺自然的同质性，阐释了压迫女性和掠夺自然不利于两性平等关系的实现及生态和谐的建构。本文以生态女性主义为视角，沿着文学批评的轨迹——作者、文本、读者，分析《弗兰肯斯坦》文本中男性与女性的两性对立，探索文本外作者的生态女性主义思想，挖掘文本所映射的工业文明时代下的生态危机，与读者进行情感对话，激发读者的女性主义意识和环保意识。

本文分为五部分，分别对应本文的五个章节。第一章简要介绍了玛丽·雪莱及《弗兰肯斯坦》，探微国内外对该作品观照的不同视角，扼要概述了生态女性主义思潮的跌宕发展过程。第二章将女性与自然进行对比，分析了在父权制社会下二者的相似性，刍议了维多利亚时代女性卑贱的社会地位和工业化时代人与自然之间尖锐的矛盾。在第三章笔者审视了父权制笼罩下的女性为实现两性平等进行的艰难抗争之路以及在人类肆意攫取破坏之后自然界对人类的反叛。第四章揭橥了作者玛丽·雪莱本人的生态女性主义构想，即女性与男性、人与自然能够实现和谐共存，阐释了作者希冀社会担负起其生态责任的美好愿景。最后一章笔者对全文进行了总结。

作为生态女性主义的先行者，玛丽·雪莱在其作品中揭示了女性与自然之间存在共同点，即都有滋养能力，能够孕育生命；两性之间要平等相处，人类也应当善待自然。本文通过探析父权制社会下女性与自然的从属地位及其反抗，挖掘了作者玛丽·雪莱的生态愿景。祈望本文能对作品及生态女性主义理论的研究略尽绵薄之力。

关键词：生态女性主义；父权制社会；自然；女性；弗兰肯斯坦

Mary Shelley's Ecological Vision: Interpretation of *Frankenstein* from the Perspective of Ecofeminism

Abstract

Mary Shelley is a renowned female writer in the British Romanticism period for her creation of the first science fiction——*Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*. Considered as one of the most outstanding Gothic novels in the literary field, it has drawn critics' attention for its high artistic appeal since its publication.

The core of ecofeminist philosophy is to make explicit the affinity between women and nature. Furthermore, ecofeminism has also contributed a lot to theorizing links between women's oppression and domination of nature in the patriarchal society, which presents an obstacle to the realization of gender equality and the construction of ecological harmony. Based on the perspectives of ecofeminism, this thesis analyzes *Frankenstein* following the track of literary criticism, namely, author, text, reader. The opposition between genders has been discovered; Mary Shelley's ecofeminism philosophy has been explored; the ecological crisis in the era of industrial revolution has been reflected; and, by ways of interaction with readers, the feminist consciousness as well as environmental awareness has been awakened.

This thesis can be divided into five parts, corresponding to five chapters. The first chapter briefly introduces the author, Mary Shelley, and her work, *Frankenstein*, reviews studies on *Frankenstein* at home and abroad and summarizes the ups and downs of the ecofeminist development. The second chapter analyzes the similarities between women and nature in the patriarchal society, making a comparison between them, and discusses women's obedience and humiliation in Victorian Age as well as the sharp contradiction between man and nature in the Industrialized Age. In the third chapter, the author demonstrates women's struggles for their gender equality and nature's revenge against human's unrestrained exploitation. The fourth chapter reveals Mary Shelley's vision of ecological feminism that not only women and men, but man and nature can exist harmoniously, and explains her hope that people could shoulder their ecological responsibilities. Finally, the author concludes the whole text in the last chapter.

As the vanguard of ecofeminism, Mary Shelley discloses in *Frankenstein* that the female and nature have commonality between them, both of whom have the ability to nourish new lives; men and women should get along with each other on the basis of equality, and humans should also be kind to nature. Hopefully, by analyzing the subordination and resistance of women and nature in the patriarchal society and further revealing Mary Shelley's ecological vision, this thesis can make some contribution to the research of both the works and ecofeminism.

Key Words: Ecofeminism; Patriarchal Society; Nature; Women; *Frankenstein*

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1 Introduction

Frankenstein, written by Mary Shelley in the nineteenth century, is known as the first science fiction and has enjoyed a good reputation for the artistic appeal since its publication. For the sake of exploring ecofeminist philosophy in *Frankenstein* and probing into the ecological vision of Mary Shelley, this part lays the groundwork in the following three aspects, namely, introduction to Mary Shelley and *Frankenstein*, reviews at home and abroad, development of ecofeminism.

1.1 Introduction to Mary Shelley and *Frankenstein*

1.1.1 Introduction to Mary Shelley

Mary Shelley (1797-1851), a British female writer, was born in a family of literary scholars in London. She was the second wife of Percy Bysshe Shelley, an outstanding romantic poet in Europe in the 19th century. Her father, William Godwin, a well-known thinker, was the author of *Enquiry Concerning Political Justice* and *Its influence on Modern Morals and Happiness*. Her mother, Mary Wollstonecraft, was a famous leader of the feminist movement. The famous book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was written by her. In this book, she advocated equality between men and women and encouraged women to think and act for themselves and fight for their rights. As such, she was destined to grow to be a major influence in the world. However, Mary Wollstonecraft passed away 9 days after giving birth to Mary. It is known certainly that Mary spent countless hours at her mother's grave during her childhood and adolescence. Despite receiving no formal educational training, Mary Shelley's diaries reveal her as one of the most well-read women of her time under the guidance of her father. It was under her father's encouragement that Mary was able to grow intellectually and creatively. At that time, no educational opportunities were provided to women. What women encountered was rigid control. And it is in this cherished literary atmosphere that she spent her formative years with her father and his many learned friends like Lord Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley and other British literary giants.

Mary's adult life was spent with her husband, Percy Bysshe Shelley and their literary friends. In actuality, Mary met him when she was 16 and he was a dashing young poet. After being expelled from Oxford University due to his ideological radicalization, Percy Bysshe Shelley followed Godwin and often went to his home for advice. There in Godwin's house he fell in love with Mary at first sight. And when she was 17, they eloped to the European continent because Percy Bysshe Shelley was already married in England. An advocate of free love, he had asked his wife, Harriet, to allow Mary to live with them; Harriet refused. Totally desperate about Percy's abandonment, a pregnant Harriet drowned herself in 1816, clearing the way for Percy's marriage to Mary.

During their married life, Mary and Percy were bathed in the romantic and literary atmosphere. Percy edited Mary's manuscript for *Frankenstein* and the preface was written in her

name. *Frankenstein* was published on January 1, 1818 and immediately became a bestseller. However, this success was a single bright spot in her adult life. From 1815 to 1819, three of her four children died in infancy; in 1822, Percy drowned on the coast of Tuscany and Mary became a widow and single mother. Mary returned to England following Percy's death. Afterwards, Mary began to edit and publish her husband's poetry and prose, which include *Posthumous Poems* and *Poetical works and letters*. She spent the rest of her time on her own writing, and published *Valperga* in 1823, *The Last Man* in 1826, *The Fortunes of Perkin Warbeck* in 1830, *Lodore* in 1835, and *Falkner* in 1837. Mary became seriously ill and died in London in February 1851, at age 53.^[2]

1.1.2 Introduction to *Frankenstein*

The full name of "*Frankenstein*" was "*Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*", which was written on the occasion of the Mary Shelley's visit to Lord Byron at his summer home in Switzerland in 1816. In history, this year was called the "Year without a Summer". This originated from the great eruption of the Tambora volcano in Indonesia in 1815. A huge volume of volcanic ash enveloped the earth and reflected the sunlight back. This led to significant cooling, snowfall, freezing and flooding in the entire northern hemisphere during the spring and summer of 1816. A large number of livestock died of frost in the cold winter. The most terrifying was that the snowfall in some places was red or brown because of the volcanic ash. The tremendous natural disasters, abnormal weather, crop failures, and subsequent famines, as well as the Napoleonic Wars of the same period, have shrouded Europe in the fear of the end of the world. It was with this ecological concern that she began her novel which changed the course of women's ideas about safety and the home.

At that time, Shelley and Mary traveled to the Swiss Alps and lived next to Byron, another British romantic poet who was also in exile at the time. They got along day and night in Geneva. On a rainy evening, Shelley, Mary and Byron could do nothing but only stay at home and chat due to the extreme weather. Probably, inspired by the gloomy atmosphere, these young men sat around the furnace, reading ghost stories and chatting for self-entertainment. Under the encouragement of Lord Byron, they made a bet of writing a novel about supernatural events to see who could write the best ghost story. Faced with the challenge, Mary thought hard but could hardly write. One night, she had a mysterious and terrifying dream, and she felt that she was suddenly enlightened, and gradually developed it into the current novel. In 1817, Mary, who was only 20 years old, wrote *Frankenstein* and the novel caused a sensation once published. This novel was not only as famous as the old Germanic stories that she and her friends once read together, but also became a bestseller at that time and a classic of Gothic novels. It has never been out of print and is still taught in numerous colleges in the United States and other countries. The novel has been translated to both stage and screen many times since its appearance.

Undoubtedly, this science fiction novel written by Mary was born with the time, reflecting the worries about the future fate of mankind, especially about knowledge, science, and humanity. It seemed that humans were unable to suppress the desire for knowledge. For example, in *Doctor*

Faustus, Faustus did not hesitate to trade with the devil to sacrifice his soul in order to gain more knowledge. After the Renaissance and the Enlightenment, human beings were more self-confident than before, and science developed rapidly in the era. The great scientists such as Newton emerged, and that's why Frankenstein would like to create life and dreamed of standing with God side by side. The consequence of this desperate challenge to nature was the price of life. Frankenstein's relatives and friends were killed by the monsters he made, and he lusted the possession of everything in the process of hunting the monsters.

At the beginning of the story, Captain Robert Walton, who was keen on scientific expeditions, was on his way to the North Pole. He described the progress of the dangerous mission in a series of letters to his sister. On the way, Walton encountered Frankenstein, saved his life, and he heard the fantasy stories of monsters created by Frankenstein. Frankenstein described his childhood in his hometown Geneva. He spent his childhood in the company of Elizabeth Lavenza, who was his sweetheart and Henry Clerval was his best friend. Later, he entered the university to study natural philosophy and chemistry. During that period, he desired to discover the secret of life gradually and he believed that he would find it in the future.

Frankenstein spent months frantically creating a creature by stitching the organs of the dead body. However, the sight terrified him when he saw the monstrosity that he had created. He ran away and later he had a fever. Frankenstein disgusted the terrible creature that he created and prepared to return to his family. But before he left, he received a letter from his father, saying that his youngest brother, William, had been murdered. While passing the woods where William was murdered, he encountered the monster and he was convinced that the monster was the murder of his brother. Arriving home, Frankenstein found that Justine Moritz was accused of the murder. In spite of her assertion of being innocent, she was executed. Frankenstein covered up the fact and but then felt frustrated and guilty. Hoping to relieve his sorrow for the death of two innocent relatives, Frankenstein took a vacation to the mountains and encountered the monster, who then begged for his understanding and creating a mate for him, a monster as grotesque as his only companion. At first, Frankenstein refused, but the monster finally convinced and persuaded him. One night, when Frankenstein doubted whether his actions was moral or not, he happened to find the monster was staring at him with a terrifying smile. Frankenstein decided to destroy his new creation and the monster was angered and swore he would revenge on Frankenstein's wedding night. Afterwards, Frankenstein was arrested and accused of murdering. When he saw his friend Henry Clerval's body, he was shocked. Finally, he was found innocent. Shortly after returning home, Frankenstein and Elizabeth married. He feared the warning of the monster and prepared to fight with him. When he heard the scream of Elizabeth, Frankenstein realized that the monster's target was Elizabeth. Determined to take revenge on the monster, on his way to the north of tracing the monster, he encountered Walton, the captain who saved his life, and Frankenstein shared his experience with the captain. Several days later, Frankenstein's health worsened and died thereafter. At the end of the novel, the monster committed suicide while seeing the body of Frankenstein.

As is mentioned above, Mary Shelley had no formal education, as was typical of women of her time. However, she was a voracious reader for she read altogether over 75 books during the year preceding the writing of *Frankenstein*. The fact that she lacked formal education, nevertheless, presents no obstacle for her novel to be one of the most enduring novels of all time. It is taught in many institutions, within a number of disciplines. Furthermore, over 100 motion pictures have been produced to date and countless novels have been written as a result of Mary Shelley's pioneering work.

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Research Abroad

Frankenstein was considered as the most excellent work of Mary Shelley, and it had drawn large numbers of attention from readers, scholars and critics since its publication in 1818. During the last two hundred years, the early researches abroad on *Frankenstein* were extensive and the research reached a climax in the middle of the 20th century. Therefore, a number of different perspectives to this novel had been proposed, such as romanticism, gothicism, ethical criticism, feminism and the like.

First of all, *Frankenstein's* full name is *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus*. Therefore, some critics compared *Prometheus legend* with *Frankenstein*, and explored the romantic ideals. In ancient legends, Prometheus was the creator of mankind and gave people knowledge and fire. Similarly, as the creator of the monster, Frankenstein abandoned his creature finally. The influence of this comparison between two works was profound. In addition, there were some romantic descriptions in *Frankenstein* such as the beautiful flower and verdure, the sublime and magnificent mountains, and the cozy life of the cottagers, which all embodied Mary Shelley's romantic ideals of nature and life.

As far as the novel traits were concerned, many critics deemed that the novel was typical Gothic style, which was filled with evil, horror, corruption, danger and so on. For example, in the *Literary Women* published in 1818, Ellen Moers considered that *Frankenstein* was a masterpiece of female Gothic, which revealed the theme of "revulsion against new born life" and the male's disgusting to the new life.^[3] At the same year, there were two magazine reviews of the novel, one was the *Gentleman's Magazine* and the other was the *Edinburgh Magazine*. The *Gentleman's Magazine* sang high praise for the description of the scenery in the novel, and regarded *Frankenstein* as "evidently the production of no ordinary writer".^[4] In addition, Walter Scott, who was the author of the review in the *Edinburgh Magazine*, considered the novel as a powerful and intriguing read.^[5] However, some negative voices also appeared. John Croker, although praised *Frankenstein* for its active imagination and beautiful language, meanwhile considered it as "a tissue of horrible and disgusting absurdity".^[6] Most of his review denied the imagination and intellect of the author and considered the novel as immoral work. In addition, Botting wrote in

Gothic that *Frankenstein* manifests a standard Gothic convention.^[7]

Apart from the perspective of the Gothic features in *Frankenstein*, many critics delved into the novel with ethical criticism. They debated for the cognition of science and technology reflected in the novel. For example, Howard Segal believed that the tragic fate of Frankenstein was typical of those who were heedless of moral and ethnic disaster caused by trampling with science and technology. In 1981, in the thesis *Science, Frankenstein, and Myth*, Theodore Ziolkowski and Ray Hammond condemned the deviated science from morality and the irresponsible scientific attitude towards technology portrayed in the novel.^[8] In 1982, *The Endurance of Frankenstein: Essays on Mary Shelley's Novel* was published, in which U.C. Knoepfelmacher Levine argued that the science of creating "being" was absolutely pseudoscience that had been proved incapable of creating life by experiment.^[9] However, Anne Mellor upheld that there were some scientific foundation about Frankenstein's behaviors of creating a new species in the early 19th century. At that time, science and technology developed quickly, which led some scientists to delve into new life deeply. The latest contribution of research concerning the ethical aspect of the novel is *The Ethical Interest of Frankenstein; Or, the Modern Prometheus: A Literature Review 200 Years After Its Publication* published in *Science and Engineering Ethics* in 2020. Its author, Irene Cambra Badii, Elena Cuardiola, and Josep E. Banos reviewed the academic literature on *Frankenstein* and deciphered that the ethical interest of *Frankenstein* is the scientist's responsibility, entailing both the motivation of consequences of the scientist's acts.

Besides, many scholars would like to analyze *Frankenstein* from the perspective of Mary Shelley's female identity. They considered the novel as a feminist work, and it manifested the inferior status of female in surviving the patriarchal society. When researchers combined the Mary Shelley's life experience with the self-awaken consciousness of woman in the man-dominated society, consequently, they figured out that, to some extent, the writing of *Frankenstein* was the awakening process of Mary Shelley's female consciousness. At the same time, the novel manifested her horror to female pregnancy. In 1976, Ellen Moers pointed out that *Frankenstein* was "the myth of female birth" in that it showed Mary Shelley's ambivalent attitude towards motherhood in her article *Female Gothic*.^[10] In the book *Madwoman in the Attic* published in 1979, co-authored by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, they reckoned that the novel was a parody of Milton's *Paradise Lost*, and described the helplessness of women in a man-dominated society.^[11] In 1983, Devon interpreted the reason why Mary Shelley used male voices in the novel.^[12] At that time, female writers could only express themselves secretly through male characters in the novel. In 1989, the book *A World of Difference* was published, in which Barbara Johnson considered *Frankenstein* as an autobiography of Mary Shelley and the monster was the representative of the author herself.^[13] Another scholar Anne K. Mellor make a research into Mary Shelley and *Frankenstein* from the perspective of female consciousness in her book *Mary Shelley: Her Life, Her Fiction, and Her Monsters* in 1989.^[14] In the book, Mellor proclaimed that the novel manifested male's fear of uninhibited female sexuality. In 1990, Kate wrote in *Fatal Attraction, or*

the *Post-Modern Prometheus* that *Frankenstein* demonstrated the author's criticism of the bourgeois family in how society separated men from women.^[15] In 2009, Theresa M. Girard argues in the thesis *Mary Shelley: Teaching and Learning through "Frankenstein"* that women should learn that they could not entirely depend upon men to rescue them in order to insure their own safety. In fact, women needed to save themselves from the men by themselves.^[16] Notably, Mark bould and Sherryl Vint, in the article of *Mary Shelley, Frankenstein and women in sf* published in *Science Fiction Film and Television* published in 2018, argued that the adapted *Frankenstein* on stage, film, radio and television bright to light systematic discrimination and a pervasive culture of sexual harassment, by which the voices of women shake the media industries like Hollywood.

Apart from these perspectives, there were many researches from other perspectives. For example, in 2017, Cavell Janice interpreted the Arctic framing narrative of *Frankenstein*. It is of great importance for understanding the evolution of the novel and the Arctic's place in Romantic literary culture.^[17] In 2018, in the paper *Fellowship beyond Kinship: Sympathy, Nature and Culture in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein*, Jung Eun Seo analyzed the harmonious theme which is all the bodies of the world jointed together, borrow and lend nature to and from each other. Love exists in this common relationship.^[18] In 2020, Maheswary • R • S introduced the women images in the paper *Representation of Women in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein as a Reflection in Victorian Era*. They are submissive, dedicated and self-sacrificing. They were considered as the "Angel in the House".^[19]

To sum up, whether the text studies focus on such literary domain like romanticism, gothicism, ethical criticism and feminism, or the hypertext studies on the field of the historical context and the cultural legacy, the research findings are by no means less fruitful than any other classic novel.

1.2.2 Research at Home

Compared with the enthusiastic research of *Frankenstein* in western countries, the early research of *Frankenstein* in China was apparently hysteretic but nonetheless less fruitful. In CNKI, from 1984 to the present, there were about 400 articles based on *Frankenstein*. At first, the earliest researches were mainly focused on the translation of *Frankenstein*. In 1980, Zhong Shiwen translated *Mrs Mary Shelley and her Frankenstein* in *South China Morning Post*. It could be seen as the earliest introduction to Mary Shelley and *Frankenstein*. Two years later, Chen Yuan and He Jianyi translated the novel and published it together. In 1994, Liu Xinming studied the artistic features, achievements and influences of Gothic fiction according to *Frankenstein*.^[20] Four years later, he translated the novel and published it. And in the same year, Ai Xiaoming studied the imagination source of Mary's *Frankenstein*.^[21] To some extent, it could be seen as the first academic paper on the study of *Frankenstein*. However, the research in this period did not attract much attention from scholars. Until recent years, a growing number of scholars laid weight on the novel and the research perspective was diverse. Based on the statistics in CNKI, the domestic researches on *Frankenstein* mainly could be divided into the following: feminism, narratology, ecological criticism, and ecofeminism, etc.

As a female writer, Mary Shelley's gender identity had led some scholars to study the novel from the perspective of feminist criticism. According to Ai Xiaoming's paper, it was Mary Shelley's gender that inspired her attention to the novel. Moreover, she believed that this work was actually an autobiography, and the monster in it was a metaphor for the plight of women. In the essay *Monster and Self in Frankenstein — Feminist Reading of Myth Creation*, Guo Fangyun believed that both sexes could find their own shadows in the monsters.^[22] Wang Xiaoyun explored the feminism of *Frankenstein* from the description of social behavior and psychology.^[23] Zhu Yanyan analyzed the feminist literary criticisms of *Frankenstein* from the 1970s to early 21st century.^[24] In 2018, Li Xiaohong also studied the female consciousness in *Frankenstein* and believed that the weakness of human nature cannot be ignored.^[25] At the same time, she pointed out that people should try their best to avoid the painful tragedies caused by the uncontrollable desires in our hearts.

In addition, some scholars interpreted *Frankenstein* from the perspective of narratology. In 2004, the essay *The Split Text and Imaginary Authority—Double Narration in Frankenstein* was written by Guo Fangyun, who uncovered the double narrative strategy used by early female writers and analyzed the entailed double meaning.^[26] On the one hand, they were driven by social customs and textual conventions, and were forced to use superficial narratives that maintain patriarchy as text disguise. On the other hand, they used in-depth narrative discourse to critique the situation of male dominance. In 2005, Li Weifang's *The Art of Narration in Frankenstein* pointed out that as far as art of narration, the novel had some salient features, especially its unique structure of narration, the clever arrangement of the narrative time and its repetition of narration.^[27] In 2008, Chen Lizhen and Cheng Yuan discussed the narrative structure formed by triple-narration and subsequent transformation of distance between author and the narrators along with development of story.^[28] Fan Yingfang and Ma Xiaochun were also the representatives of discussing the narrative art. Zhang Lu probed into the personal characteristics of narration in 2009.^[29] Ruan Shiqin wrote an essay *On the Narrative Form of Frankenstein* in 2010, which discussed the narrative form of epistolary and revealed the ambiguity of the author's female identity confronting in the patriarchal literary.^[30] In 2015, Li Guiqiong wrote an essay *Unreliable Narrative and Criticism of Hidden Meaning—Triple Narrative Strategy From the Perspective of Frankenstein*, analyzing the reliability of its narrator to reveal the allegorical effect of its creation and the moral criticism of its implicit meaning.^[31] In 2019, Liu Shuangli studied the art analysis of narration of *Frankenstein*.^[32] And Zou Ruijie illustrated the unreliable narrative of *Frankenstein* in 2020.^[33] As mentioned before, the researches from the narration was multiple and these illustrations enabled the reader to understand the text more easily.

In recent years, there have been abundant research findings from the ecological perspective. Zhang Zhe thought that it helped us to understand the embarrassment of the traditional dualistic thinking mode in the West and the ecological crisis that might be caused by the human-centered view of nature from the perspective of ecocriticism. Additionally, it could also inspire us to realize

the natural view and sense of responsibility of romantic thinkers.^[34] XuJian and Ma Yongliang thought that *Frankenstein* pointed out that humans cannot blindly pursue science, but should apply science rationally under the guidance of humanistic spirit to make humans and nature closer and harmonious.^[35] Sun Yefeng and Jiang Xianwen believed that the great development of science and technology may cause the imbalance of spiritual ecology.^[36] It not only distorted the normal relationships between people, but also the individual's own spirit was highly alienated. Cao Shanke believed that the root of Frankenstein's tragedy lied in his violation of basic social ethics and morality.^[37] In the essay *Crime and Punishment about Frankenstein as a scientist*, Liu Ke illustrated the dissuasive significance of Frankenstein's tragic fate, appealed to respect life and rethink the responsibility of scientist's conduct.^[38] Xu Pengyun studied the novel from the perspective of ecological ethics, and deeply analyzed the conflict and harmony between man and nature contained in the novel.^[39] Besides, Sheng Dan and Yang Kun also analyzed *Frankenstein* from the perspective of ecological criticism respectively. Fan Xinyue interpreted the novel from the aspect of ecological ethics and confirmed the important cautionary significance of it.^[40] In 2015, Yang Sainan's paper *Analysis of "Frankenstein" Eco Ideas* analyzed the ecological thinking of the novel, which included the natural ecology, social ecology and spiritual ecology. In addition, it also revealed the impact on modern society.^[41] In 2015, Xu Xian and Xu Liqin co-authored a thesis *The Ecological Thoughts in Frankenstein*, aiming to explore its ecological ideas from the aspects of natural ecology, social ecology and spiritual ecology.^[42]

Apart from these analyses, some other papers attempted to analyze the *Frankenstein* from the perspective of ecofeminism. For instance, in 2011, Wei Jing attempted to reinterpret *Frankenstein* from the perspective of ecofeminism.^[43] And she published another paper *Redemption road of nature and women—An eco-feminist reading of Frankenstein* in 2015.^[44] In the paper, she illustrated the tragedy of nature and women originate the oppressive way of thinking in the patriarchal society. In the *Ecofeminism in Frankenstein* published in 2012, Zheng Zheng delved into the relationship between mankind and nature, as well as men and women under the binary opposition.^[45] In this system, men were dominator, and they suppressed women and attempted to conquer nature because of their lust for power. She warned the reader of possible ecological unbalance with her unique feminine point of view. In 2015, Zhang Danfeng discussed the Mary Shelley's consciousness of ecofeminism and delved into the relationship among men and nature, women and nature, men and women, aiming to illustrate that Mary Shelley was a writer with rich ecofeminist's conscious.^[46]

To sum up, the perspectives of scholars at home when interpreting Mary Shelley's work *Frankenstein* were diverse, especially the ecological one with more fruitful findings. With the harsh reality of the ecological crisis around the world, relatively speaking, the research results of Chinese scholar may be more relevant to the reality through a close study of the novel.

1.3 Introduction to Ecofeminism

Ecological feminism is more commonly and succinctly referred to ecofeminism, which first finds explicit expression in the 1970s. Although the word “ecofeminism” is a singular noun, it is not simple or homogeneous. Instead it involves a dynamic diversity of perspectives, changing and developing over time while setting foot in academic field, especially in literary criticism across multiple subjects like race, class, gender, age, sexual orientation, religion and nationality.

With the rise of ecocriticism theory in the 1960s, people began to pay attention to natural ecology. In 1974, Francoise d'Eaubonne, first coined the term “ecofeminism” in her foundational work *Le Féminisme ou la Mort*. She creatively connected natural ecology with women, revealed the inner connection between them. Since then, ecofeminism has attracted scholars and activists from various disciplines to evaluate the relationship between man and nature through gender reconsideration. By the 1980s and 1990s, the ecological schools developed constantly and became the main foundation for the development of ecofeminism. Along with the progress of technology and productivity, the feminist liberation movement were also in blossom. People began to pay attention to the status of women and demanded that women enjoyed the same rights as men in society. Ecofeminism, as a product of the combination of eco-criticism and feminist criticism, mainly criticized the destruction and oppression of nature and women under male rule, in order to call on people to reacquaint nature and women, and advocated women's role in the ecological protection movement so as to establish a harmonious relationship between man and nature, and between man and woman. Ecofeminism was based on a thorough non-dualism philosophy. Ecofeminism had always been a thought based on reflection and criticism of the traditional dualism and mechanical view of nature in the West, and advocated an organic theory.

Into the 1980s and 1990s, scholars continued to attack oppressions of women and nature and called for their joint liberation from man's oppression and subordination. Into the new millennium, with the emergence of environmental humanities, ecofeminists broadened their appeals via approaches concerning ecocriticism, critical animal studies, biodiversity as well as explorations from interdisciplinary, postcolonial and cross-cultural perspective.

With ecofeminism emerging in the latter half of the 20th century and being extremely innovative, many critics classified it as a branch of postmodernist theory. To some extent, this classification made sense, for ecofeminism inherited the important spirit of the postmodernism theory of social criticism. However, ecofeminism had surpassed postmodernism in two aspects: first, it overcame postmodernism's fascination with cities, technology and development, projected its sights on the vast natural world, and seriously thought about the existence and destiny of nature that surpassed human beings; second, it was not limited to criticism and subversion, but learnt from practical feminist theories and movements, actively constructed theories, and got rid of dangerous tendency of some postmodernist theories slipped into nihilism and agnosticism.^{[47]2}

The definition of ecofeminism contains the two concepts, namely, “ecological feminism” and

“feminist ecology”. On the one hand, ecofeminism emphasizes absorption of feminism into ecocritical theory, which acquires new theoretical perspectives and supportive theory, on the other hand, ecofeminism also highlighted the application of eco-criticism to the feminism movement, that is, to put ecofeminism into action, thereby avoiding slipping into abstraction and dogmatization without practicability.^{[47]2}

The term “ecofeminism” covers a jointly stance, in theory and practice on women and nature. That is, the control over women and nature was a product of patriarchal culture, which was formed in ancient times and was strengthened due to dualistic epistemology and the rational instrumentalism in the technological revolution.^[48] In the book of *Ecofeminism*, Wei Qingqi defines ecofeminism as follows. Ecofeminism primarily focuses on the ‘posteriority’ relationship between women and nature, that is, all marginal groups were under the dual oppressive structure of patriarchy.”^{[49]xix}

The American ecofeminist scholar Val Plumwood proposes that ecofeminism is a diverse cultural perspective which involves the analysis of the interrelationships between various complex social governance systems in analyzing the relationship between women and nature, such as racialism, colonialism, gender discrimination, etc.^[50] The argument of ecological diversity was the continuation of feminist theory in the ecological field. This ideal reiterated the significance of constructing a female discourse that was completely distinct from the male discourse. Finally, human oppression of nature and men’s oppression of women originated from the same dualistic logic. Solving one of them would definitely make contribution to solving the other problem. All in all, both of these two problems should be highlighted at the same place.

Gaard Greta proposes in her work *Women, Water, Energy, An Ecofeminist Approach* that not only does ecofeminism probe into the relation between feminism and environmentalism, as well as women and nature, but it does discuss the problem based on the following premise, namely, the way we treat nature is directly related to and reflected in the way we treat each other.^[51] As a feminist ethics, ecofeminism dedicated to study the interconnected conceptual structures that approve the oppression of some specific groups, including women, minority groups, LGBT people.^[52]

There are different ways of classification when it comes to ecofeminism. Most ecofeminists held different views when exploring relations between women and nature. Karen Warren, one of the pioneers of ecofeminist literary criticism, divides the ecofeminism of literary criticism into ten aspects, that is, historical, conceptual, empirical, socioeconomic, linguistic, symbolic, religious, epistemological, political, and ethical. These ten aspects, respectively, deal with the theoretical traceability, definition composition, social reality, economic basis, language construction, literary characteristics, theological connection, the knowledge structure of the research object, the relationship between literary criticism and social movements, and environmental ethics of ecological feminist literary criticism. Although Warren’s classification was only one approach and has not been agreed by all critics, it still provides a valuable perspective for readers and

researchers to analyze the target text.^[47]⁵ According to Karen Warren, ecofeminism is an umbrella term, or a multicultural perspective.^[53]

Generally, ecofeminism can be roughly divided into five types, namely, cultural ecofeminism, spiritual ecofeminism, social ecofeminism, socialist ecofeminism, and philosophical ecofeminism. Although different ecofeminism types are standing in different analysis angles, all of them focus on improving the relationship between humans and nature.

Among the above five types, cultural ecofeminism and spiritual ecofeminism belong to the spiritual respect of ecofeminism and its theoretical spirit mainly came from liberal feminism and radicalism. Both of cultural ecofeminism and spiritual ecofeminism emphasize the spiritual and cultural roots of the oppression suffered by women and nature, and focus on women's essential feature that women are related to nature, thus changing social environment and value is the fundamental way to liberate women and nature. Social ecofeminism and socialist ecofeminism belong to the social respect. Both of them shed light on the foundation of gender construction, pay attention to social changes, and emphasize the social and political reasons of the dual control over women and nature. From these two respects, changing the system has been the fundamental way to liberate women and nature. The philosophical ecofeminism criticizes dualism and unfair dominance. Meanwhile, it deeply explores philosophical reasons why women and nature are exploited and oppressed, prevents our environment from crisis because of anthropocentrism thoughts, and further, probes into an appropriate way to harmonious coexistence.

2 Subordination of Women and Nature in the Patriarchal Society in *Frankenstein*

In the Western traditional axiology, man and nature, men and women are opposed to each other, and women and nature are also oppressed by a patriarchal society. In a society dominated by the patriarchal culture, not only nature become servants and enslaved ones of human beings, but alienated women also become ornaments and appendages in the social order ruled by men.^[54] Both nature and women are expelled to the oppressed and neglected positions of “other”, “edge”, “voiceless” and “subsidiary”, and become victims of patriarchy.^[55]

Ecofeminists argue that anthropocentrism and patriarchy have a similar ruling logic. Human beings are separated from nature, and men are opposed to women. Kourany holds the view that “women and nature, reproduction, materiality, and otherness are grouped into one category, and men and culture, production, form, and egoism are grouped into another category, which is part of the western patriarchal ideology, seeking rationality for demeaning and raping of nature and women.”^[56] In *Frankenstein*, women and nature are placed in the position of “used” and “sacrificed”, which manifest Mary’s sympathy for the oppressed. To pursue her ecological vision, one of Mary Shelley’s primary task is to expose the dualism and the ways in which feminizing nature and naturalizing women has served as justification for the domination of women and the earth.

2.1 The Unity between Female and Nature

The connection between female and nature is the theoretical foundation of ecofeminism. Their resemblance can be presented in different aspects. As Carolyn Merchant says in her work *Women and the Environment*, “The connection between women and nature has a long history, and their connection continues steadily through culture, language and history.”^[57] In Greek mythology, Gaia has always been regarded as the goddess of earth. She was seen as one of the earliest gods and as the mother of the god of sky, Ouranos, and the god of mountain, Ourea. Furthermore, she was the grandmother of Zeus. As a consequence, Gaia was considered as the mother of all gods and everything in the world. Similarly, in the ancient mythology of China, Nvwa was also known as the mother of the earth. It was said that she created human beings by moulding the yellow clay according to the shape of herself. Apart from this, she also mended the sky by melting colored stones so as to keep humans away from disasters. Therefore, according to these ancient mythologies, the interconnection between nature and women has existed since ancient times. Ecofeminism upholds that women’s physiological features such as menstruation, pregnancy and childbirth are very similar to natural cycles, and they are periodical. Compared with men, women are more likely to be the embodiment of nature. The famous American ecofeminist Susan Griffin,

through long-term observation of women, came into a conclusion, that we know that we(women) are created by nature... we are nature, it is the nature with the concept of nature, it is the weeping nature, telling the nature of nature.^[58] It is distinct that nature and women are connected to some extent.

2.1.1 Feminized Nature

Ecofeminism sheds light on the identification of women with nature. Even before, “Mother Earth” was used as a metaphor to represent people’s recognition that nature is as the mother nurturing the earth in western culture. In etymology, the etymon of the word “nature” is *nat*, which means to be born. In the women’s liberation movement in the last century and the ecological movement at that time, the appeals for female independence and environmental protection contribute to the close relation between nature and women.

In the novel, Mary describes Caroline’s experience when she was young and what she can get from the nature. As the mother of Frankenstein, Caroline suffers a lot when she is a child, for she has to take support her family for her father’s illness. Therefore, “everything she experienced has shaken her health, and even her usual mental peace.”^{[1]20} Herein, when bathed in the vibrant natural scenery, she feels very pleasurable and excited. It is nature that heals her trauma physically and spiritually. For Caroline, setting foot on a wonderful land with pleasant climate seems like to return to the embrace of mother. The land and the climate, as parts of nature, provide shelter and spiritual support for her.

Another female character, Elizabeth, loves nature very much and feels pleasant in enjoying the pastoral scenes of nature. When the trifle occupies her time, “the blue lake and snow-clad mountains” ^{[1] 50} provide the spiritual refuge for her. In such a tranquil environment, she could escape from real life temporarily and regain courage and vitality to struggle against the patriarchal world. Karen J. Warren, the famous ecofeminist, believes that it is beneficial for women to heal the hurt from the patriarchal domination when they get close to nature in soul.^[59] It is the harmoniously natural scenery that saves her out of the tedious and humdrum daily life.

Among these characters, the monster is born without a name, without father and mother. It is just created by Frankenstein without biology relations, abandoned by his creator and alienated by human society. However, nature accepts it without hesitation. “The desert mountains and dreary glaciers are my refuge.”^{[1] 85} The mountains and glaciers, as parts of nature, provide kindness and shelter for the monster like a mother.

In addition, there are also some depictions of nature, from which nature’s feminized features are presented. For instance, “whilst those of the black bird and thrush were sweet and enticing.”^{[1]88} “the sweet voice of a bird burst forth amidst the universal stillness.”^{[1]119} Here, the blackbird and thrush are not only personified but further feminized expressed by words, such as “sweet” and “enticing”. Besides, Mary Shelley shares her concept of feminized nature by a series of images.

The pleasant showers and genial warmth of spring greatly altered the aspect of the earth; ...the birds sang in more cheerful notes; ...my spirits were elevated by the enchanting appearance of nature; ...the future gilded by bright rays of hope and anticipations of joy.^{[1]99}

It surprised me that what before was desert and gloomy should now bloom with the most beautiful flowers and verdure. My senses were gratified and refreshed by a thousand scents of delight and a thousand sights of beauty.^{[1]100}

The labors I endured were no longer to be alleviated by the bright sun or gentle breezes of spring.^{[1]124}

...the soft air just ruffled the water and caused a pleasant motion among the trees as we approached the shore, from which it wafted the most delightful scent of flowers and hay;
^{[1]174}

...we walked for a short time on the shore, ...and contemplated the lovely scene of waters.^{[1]175}

According to the paragraphs above, it can be seen that words used to describe nature are often used to describe women in life, such as “pleasant”, “genial”, “warmly”, “cheerful”, “enchanting”, “bright”, “beautiful”, “beauty”, “bright”, “gentle”, “soft”, “pleasant”, “delightful”, and “lovely”. Furthermore, the word “beautiful” and “pleasant” are used more than once. These words are representative and are often used to describe the natural scenery, which can soothe anyone who intimates the nature.

From the analysis above, it can be found that although it is very tough and depressive for women to go forward in the patriarchal world, women could get consolation from nature and become cheerful, confident and hopeful in the natural environment because women, as mentioned above, are angels embodying nature. Nature is always the residence and spiritual refuge for human beings, like a mother who is reluctant to get far away from her children. Consequently, whenever women are in great pain or suffer from unfair treatment, they could always seek consolation and relief from the feminized nature.

2.1.2 Naturalized Women

Women, in *Frankenstein*, possess characteristics of nature. Facing the same natural environment, men have a totally different reaction from women. In the text, men represented by Frankenstein regard the conquest of nature as their target, while women, such as Frankenstein's fiancée Elizabeth, tries to remain the harmony of family. Her pursuit of harmony and order is opposed to Frankenstein's desire to vanquish nature.

She busied herself with following the aerial creations of the poets; and in the majestic and wondrous scenes which surrounded our Swiss home –the sublime shapes of the

mountains, the changes of the seasons, tempest and calm, the silence of winter, and the life and turbulence of our Alpine summers...^{[1]23}

Since the death of Frankenstein's mother Caroline, Elizabeth has spent most of her life taking care of family members without complaints. Although Frankenstein puts off the marriage with Elizabeth, she still waits for him without any doubt. She is as kind and virtuous as nature. She believes that nature and human beings are interconnected and influenced by each other, and all of them are governed by certain natural laws.

In addition, to some extent, some of other features of naturalized women can be shown by Elizabeth's appearance characteristics. She is "very fair" and "seem to shed radiance" like an angel; her hair is "the brightest living god"; her forehead is "clear and full"; her eyes are "blue and cloudless"; and "her lips and face are so emotional and full of sweetness. Everyone thinks that she has an extraordinary temperament, as if she is an angel from heaven."^{[1]21} Her soul is as holy as a "shrine lamp" ^{[1]24}. Her sympathy, sweet smile, soft voice, and her celestial eyes have satisfied the whole family. Moreover, her soft and lovely living spirit attracts family members a lot. It is Elizabeth's accompany that relieves Frankenstein's sorrow more or less. Similarly, in the eyes of Clerval, "Elizabeth is so full of kindness and tenderness. Without her, Frankenstein may not be so perfectly humanized and so generous in thought. If she does not show him what kindness is, he will not pursue his ambitious goal by making good deeds, and then his passion for adventure would not be so kind."^{[1]25}

Among all the naturalized women in the novel, Caroline is a character worthy of mention. In the eyes of Frankenstein, she is tender and benevolent. She is the most self-giving one who always considers others. Caroline is a typical housewife in Victorian Age, whose natural features could also be found easily in many details throughout the novel. Caroline is naturalized in the novel mainly through her selfless quality like nature. She entirely devotes herself to her husband and children. She tries to play the role of a qualified wife and a responsible mother in the patriarchal society. In addition, she cares the poor and often "enters the cottages of the poor" for she suffered from the same situation previously. Besides, she brought up an adopted daughter Elizabeth and took care of her without complaint till she caught the scarlet fever. Therefore, what Caroline does for her family makes explicit the core of ecofeminist philosophy-the affinity between women and nature in that both are mothers. On top of that, Caroline's devotion to her family reveals that the commonality between women and nature is that children depend upon their mother and humans depend on nature.

Another female, Safie, who appears in narration of the monster represents features of nature as well. She has a "countenance of angelic beauty and expression". ^{[1]100} "Her eyes are dark, but gentle, albeit full of life; she has a fixed proportion of features, and her complexion is very beautiful, each cheek is dyed with a lovely pink."^{[1]100} In addition, when she sings a song, her voice "flows in a rich rhythm, like a nightingale in the woods".^{[1]102} Just as ecofeminists argued that there are some similarities between women and animal in temperament. Karen J. Warren points out

that women are often described with animal terms, such as “cow, fox, chicken, snake, mother, old bat, cat”, and nature is often personalized as an image being violated and controlled.^{[60]217} This shows a famous view held by eco-feminists, that is, “women are closer to nature than men”. The above descriptions all imply that women and nature are easier to communicate and their relationship is more intimate. Therefore, the female characters are naturalized in the text.

As is mentioned before, it can be seen that nearly all women in the novel are as selfless as nature who can provide their possessions for men. Elizabeth spends most of her time in dealing with the trivial matters. Caroline tries to take good care of her husband and children, and nearly devotes entire life to the family as a housemaid. Safie possesses pretty voice like a nightingale and often sings songs for her family members. All of these women are common with nature as they share the common unselfish quality with nature. Ecofeminists stand for the opinion that women are closer to nature than men because of their physiology and gender roles. To some extent, it is child-raising and family care-taking that make women intimate to nature.

All in all, nature and women are similar. On the one hand, nature is feminized because it can provide human beings safety and vitality like a mother. The above analysis takes some natural things as examples, such as water and flowers, to demonstrate that nature is feminized. On the other hand, women are naturalized through some common characteristics with nature, such as devotion and unselfishness. In a nutshell, the close relationship between women and nature is vividly depicted by Mary Shelley in the novel. That is, women are usually naturalized, and nature is feminized.

2.2 Submissive Women in the Men-dominated Victorian Age

In the English Victorian Age, women rights are exceedingly bounded and they are required to provide their husband with a clean house, to prepare food on their table, and to bring up their children. In addition to this, they should cater for their husband’s predominance including sexual pervert, castigation and economic impoverishment. They play as the “proper lady” and comply to their allocated roles as mother, wives, promoters and relievers of men. Mary Shelley, as a contemporary of Queen Victoria and with her latter half of life resting in the Victorian Age, is by any means an eloquent witness of the subordinated women in that era. The female characters depicted in *Frankenstein*, though they are created in the pre-Victorian period, unveil the prelude of the upcoming women images onto the stage of the Victorian Age.

Female characters like Elizabeth, Caroline and Justine, who are disregarded and even abused like all the other women in the Victorian Age, are portrayed as a passive, voiceless and marginalized woman respectively in the novel. By exposing the harsh reality of women’s subordination and oppression, Mary Shelley presents with the readers many of the problematic features of men’s treatment of women which underlie the environmental crisis.

2.2.1 Elizabeth: a Passive Woman

Women, during the Victorian Age, are presumed to sink quietly as an object to men. They are passive to accept the arrangement for them and they are considered as illogical, sentient, and conscientious. The materialization of women is fixed for the period and remains a consonant subject all over Victorian literature. After the marriage, her propriety, her possessions, and even her specifications are under the power of her husband.

In the novel, the passive woman is vividly manifested by Elizabeth. She is adopted by the family of Frankenstein. For Frankenstein, Elizabeth is “a sister who is closer to his sister, and a wonderful companion for all his activities and pleasures.”^{[1]22} The relationship between Frankenstein and Elizabeth is manifested by his explicit possessiveness. She is the companion of his “pleasure”, which shows that the need of female is inferior to that of man. Their relationship is based on her utility to him, to some extent, this utility begins with the expression of Frankenstein’s mother. On the previous night, before Elizabeth is taken to their home, Frankenstein’s mother says joyfully: “I have a beautiful present for my Frankenstein--he will get it tomorrow.”^{[1]22} And on the second day, she fulfills her promise.

And when, on the morrow, she presented Elizabeth to me as her promised gift, I, with childish seriousness, interpreted her words literally and looked upon Elizabeth as mine--mine to protect, love, and cherish. All praises bestowed on her I received as made to a possession of my own. We called each other familiarly by the name of cousin. No word, no expression could body forth the kind of relation in which she stood to me--my more than sister, since till death she was to be mine only. ^{[1]22}

From the above paragraph, as a child, Frankenstein has just met Elizabeth on the second day and his mother gives him a gift-Elizabeth. This materialized description of women reflects the passive subordination of women in the Victorian Age. They are appendages to men, and there is no independent identity and personality.^[61]

In patriarchal society, men are synonymous with “power”, “strength”, “reason” and “justice”, while women are synonymous with “beauty”, “sexy”, “sensibility” and “a better half”. ^[41] Frankenstein describes Elizabeth mostly by the words “cloudless”, “sweetness” and “fair”. It seems that the importance of female’s role is secondary to man. Here, Frankenstein repeats the statement that Elizabeth is “more than sister” and believes that “since till death she was to be mine only.” It also reveals that Frankenstein’s attitude to his beloved ones takes a tone of ownership. In a sense, the word “death” also implies the tragic fate of Elizabeth in the end.

Therefore, Elizabeth’s death is a strong accusation against the abuse of technology and development of immoderation by men in the industrial society. Frankenstein’s expression puts himself as a superior being to his surroundings, which indicates the transformation of relationship between him and nature he views as objects on the basis of his utility.^[62] The reaction of Frankenstein to Elizabeth is a reflection of his personality, which demonstrates the thoughts of

Mary that ownership is the natural instinct of human beings. Although Frankenstein proclaims that he loves Elizabeth, she is still considered as the possession first and foremost. On account of possessing a dominant power, Frankenstein must possess the objects around him. In this sense, Elizabeth cannot be viewed as a self-dependent person. When Caroline is sick because of taking care of Elizabeth who has caught the scarlet fever, at the moment of death, she still asks Elizabeth to succeed her to take good care of her family. She says “my firmest hope for future happiness rests on the prospect of your union. Now, this expectation will be your father’s comfort. Elizabeth, my love, please take my place to care for my children in the days to come.” [1]29

Therefore, after the death of Caroline, Elizabeth undertakes the responsibility of taking care of the family as she promises on Caroline’s deathbed. Even in the moments of depression, sadness and anxiety, she still restrains herself and comforts others. This kind of choice that goes against human instinct reflects the contradictions and depression of women. “She did conceal her grief and tried her best to provide comfort to all of us. She looked at life steadily and took the responsibility for life with courage and enthusiasm. She is dedicated to those who are taught to call her uncles and cousins. When she recalled the sunshine of smiles and spent them on us, she was never as charming as she was now. In the effort to make us forget, she even forgot her regrets.” [1]30

As the fiancée of Frankenstein, Elizabeth becomes the emotional support of the family after the death of his mother. Consequently, Elizabeth’s world is confined to a family circle, and her mission in life is to serve her family. Even so, like most of the women in the patriarchy society, she is excluded from the society, where they are not respected and even discriminated. Generally, women are considered as their own property and pets at home.^[63]

Although Elizabeth seems to be the person who Frankenstein is attached to, he deliberately loses connection with her when he engrosses himself into the experiment. However, Elizabeth is always so empathetic and does not blame him at all. She waits patiently for Frankenstein’s attention. As she is supposed to be ignored and neglected. They are the decorations of the supreme patriarchal society. Their highest pursuit seems to find a suitable man and get married. Elizabeth spends nearly a lifetime waiting for her fiancée, but in the end she becomes a victim of Frankenstein’s pursuit of fame and fortune.

2.2.2 Caroline: a Marginalized Woman

Just as is mentioned above, a wife’s actual job is to love, respect and to carry out the instruction of her husband in Victorian Age. Her obligation is to satisfy her husband and to perfectly raise her children. She is expected to be dutiful and affectionate to her husband. The angel is submissive and dedicated, as well as compassionate, gracious, self-suffering, adorable and above all- pure. The perfect wife or woman in Victorian Age are considered to be the “Angel in the house”. The women are confined to home and are expected to be private at-home, perfect and exceedingly feeble when anything outside the home is bothered. They lose their subjective identity gradually, and become marginalized women.

Caroline is presented as the most obvious example to represent the image of a marginalized

woman. She can be regarded as an “Angel in the house”, because of her flawlessly self-sacrificing and intelligently attentive to the needs of others. She devotes herself to her father, her husband and her children. She sacrifices herself to be a good daughter, a good wife and a good mother.

Frankenstein’s mother, Caroline, is the daughter of Alphone Frankenstein’s friend. After her father’s death, she is taken in by, and later marries with Alphone Frankenstein. When her father lies on a bed of sickness because of suffering numerous misfortunes, into poverty, Caroline attends him with the great tenderness. She has an unusual mind, and her courage rises to support her when she faces difficult situation. “She was engaged in simple work. She braided the straw and tried various ways to earn money in order to support her arduous life.”^{[1]19} In fact, Caroline is one of the few prominent characters shown earning an income. Although she is courageous to support herself when her father is alive, yet she still becomes an orphan and a beggar because of the death of her father and the subsistence decreases. She cannot live independently without her father. While the arrival of Alphone Frankenstein is like a protective spirit for the poor girl who is dedicated to taking care of herself. Two years later, they get married and Caroline becomes his wife. There are considerable differences between their ages, but this situation seems to bring them closer together. Alphone Frankenstein has a sense of justice, and he should compensate her for the pain she endured. Everything he does is to fulfill her wishes and convenience.

He strove to shelter her, as a fair exotic is sheltered by the gardener, from every rougher wind and to surround her with all that could tend to excite pleasurable emotion in her soft and benevolent mind.^{[1]20}

It seems that Caroline lives in a cozy atmosphere, however, her life has already arranged just like “Angel in the house”. She does not need to worry about tomorrow and what she should deal with is the trivial matters at home. She gives birth to three children successively and adopts Elizabeth later. The only responsibility she should take is to look after her children. She is considered as the best woman. When Elizabeth catches the scarlet fever severely in a greatest danger, Caroline attends her distemper regardless of other family member’s persuasion. Finally, Elizabeth is saved, but the consequences of this imprudence are fatal to her preserver. Not surprisingly, Caroline sickens, however, the fortitude and benignity of women does not desert her on her deathbed. She still comforts and contributes her last soft to them, expecting to the wedding of her son Frankenstein and Elizabeth.

Under the influence of the patriarchal culture, Caroline gradually loses herself, her status is gradually marginalized, she loses the right to speak, and becomes the “other” of voiceless. She abides by the rules set by the male world for women, and becomes an accessory of the family and men, which is just an existence of objectivity. This is a kind of persecution to her by the patriarchal culture, and she will not resist. At this time, she has lost her subject identity, and she passively accepts the setting of the patriarchal culture to her. She dedicates her whole life to her father, husband and son, and eventually passes away due to caring for Elizabeth who contracts scarlet

fever. There is only endless dedication and sacrifice in Caroline's world, and there is no trace of personal desire in herself. Ecofeminists uphold that women are subordinated to men in a male-dominated world and the stereotype of female is submissive angel. As far as the traditional division of labor concerned, men are in the centre of public field, while women usually stay at home and undertake the domestic duty of trivial matters such as laundry, nursing children, cooking, sweeping and so on. They have no choice but accept the arrangement of destiny.

2.2.3 Justine: a Voiceless Woman

In traditional western civilization, men hold derogatory attitudes towards emotional, physical and feminine traits. The nobility of civilization and rationality is based on the transcendence of these traits. Ecofeminism explores the sources of oppression over women and domination of nature. In the binary relationship between men, civilization, and women, nature, women and nature gradually lose their subjective status and become "voiceless".^[64]

In the patriarchal culture, men obliterate women's voices, thus women lose their speech right and become silent others. Patriarchy, therefore, becomes the source of men's domination over women and human's domination over nature. Men under the patriarchy are more unscrupulous in oppressing nature and controlling women. In *Frankenstein*, all the narrators belong to men, while women lose right of speech and become silent "other". Their voices are all covered by the voice of the male narrator.

Justine is another victim of the female role in male-dominated world. When she is twelve, Justine becomes a servant of the family of Frankenstein, because her mother could not endure her, and treats her very badly after the death of her father. Although her disposition is gay, yet she depresses herself in order to become an elegant servant. She considers Caroline as a model of all excellence, and strives to imitate her words and behavior. Although Justine tries her hardest to act as the angel maid at home, she is accused of murdering William, for the monster imputes the crime to her. When she is called on for her defense, she gathers her power, speaks clearly with her voice, and describes what happened on that night to convince her innocence. However, when she begs permission to have a few witnesses examined concerning her character, they hesitate and quit because of fear and hatred.

Several witnesses were called who had known her for many years, and spoke well of her: but fear and hatred of the crime of which they supposed her guilty rendered them timorous and unwilling to come forward. ^{[1]69}

The second day, Justine admits but lies because she thinks she might be pardoned. In an evil hour, she could do nothing but only subscribes to a lie in case of excommunication and suffering the punishment of hell fire. Finally, she becomes a scapegoat of the sin of Frankenstein. "She perished on the scaffold as a murderess."^{[1]74} Even so, Frankenstein still conceals the truth of the death of William. Therefore, in this trial of wretched mockery of justice, Justine becomes an "other" of voiceless in the patriarchal center due to her status as a maid. "The hegemony of

intimidation and lure is the source of the evil of the tragedy of female life and text submission.”^[22] The patriarchal hierarchy and oppressive thinking does great harm to women. Justine loses the right to speak when facing of the crimes that does not belong to her. Not only has she lost the freedom to plead for herself, but also has lost the right to know the truth.

Undoubtedly, although the female characters in *Frankenstein* are all kind and fearless, and they influence the surroundings by their personal charm, their fate is still tragic. By demonstrating the destiny of female images, Mary would like to present the status of women in the patriarchy society. They are confined at home and take order from men, playing the traditional image of “Angel in the house”. Women are regarded as the possession of men, losing the agency for determining their own life, and exploited the rights into the society. This kind of oppression against women is similar to the man’s domination of nature. Both are rooted in the logic of dominance of androcentrism and anthropocentrism as presented by ecofeminists.

2.3 Distorted Nature in the Technology-oriented Industrial Age

At the beginning of the 19th century, Western countries have completed the industrial revolution successively. Science and technology developed rapidly in Europe, and major discoveries were made in physics, chemistry, and biology. People have great illusions about science and technology. They uphold that human beings are the center of nature. As long as they master science and technology, they can override nature and do whatever they want. Human beings always dream of replacing the roles of God. At that time, people are “driven by the nature of self-thinking to peep at the laws of nature, and human beings are the center of that law.”^[65] In *Frankenstein*, nature is distorted and becomes the victim of men’s pursuit of fame and fortune in the Industrial Age, which can be manifested by the weird climate and the creation of monster.

2.3.1 Weird Climate: the Year without Summer

People live in an epoch of scientific and technological advances, and the ecological crisis subsequently emerges. A growing concern over climate changes emerges out of the human activities. In history, 1816 is often called “Year without a Summer”, the weather event has been traced to climatic changes resulting from the eruption of a volcano in Indonesia the previous spring, releasing massive clouds of sulfurous ash into the atmosphere which lead to temperatures falls, torrential rains, widespread crop failures, and forced migrations.

The “Year without a Summer” evokes fears concerning the ominous influence of polar ice on the British climate and gives new urgency to the question of how human beings should respond to climate change. Literature composed after 1816 reflects a culture, which refers to poetic visions of climate, projects of improvement, and Arctic ice. Mary Shelley describes the summer of 1816 as an unexpectedly “wet, ungenial summer”, during which she begins to compose *Frankenstein, or the Modern Prometheus* (1818). The novel can be seen as a response to the climate changes, concerning the development in science and technology strangely tied to the weird climate.

There are some connections between the climate depicted in Mary Shelley's novel and the atmospheric conditions of 1816. The "wet, ungenial" climate is weirdly reflected in the watery, clouded eyes of the monster," eyes that frighten even as they urge us to acknowledge our kinship. The "watery, clouded eyes of the monster", and his recurring appearances during periods of rain and storm, enhance an association between the creature and the weather which reflects his weird climatological origins, both in Mary's imagination and in Frankenstein's experiments.

Frankenstein is often considered as the first science-fiction novel, and it also might be regarded as the first weird tale. The novel's portrayal of technology, weather, and creature is linked to the industrial development emerging in the period when the novel was being created. The climate change may be seen as an unintended consequence of the invention of the steam engine, similarly, the creature's destructive power may be regarded as the unintended consequence of Frankenstein's experiment. The creature symbolizes the capacity of prompting the environment crisis.

Placing *Frankenstein* in its ecological context enables us to see the novel's exploration of the effects of Frankenstein's experiment: whether humans should attempt to intervene in the global climate. In engaging with the crisis of 1816, *Frankenstein* presents the uncertainty of the period in its representation of phenomena that could be interpreted as signs of a cooling climate, or as the projections of observers' minds.

2.3.2 Monster: the Violation of Nature's Law

Admittedly, literature is full of artificially created beings, including Collodi's Pinocchio, Yod in Marge Pierce's *He, She, It* and so on. These beings all yearn to be loved, to fit in, to have a family, and to become human as the monster does. Nevertheless, what distinguishes the monster from most of the artificially created beings is that he is created from bits and pieces from other people. Namely, Frankenstein's creature is the ultimate example of a body patched together with different organs from distinct donors, which is in violation of the law of life reproduction in nature.

As a technoscientist born out of a youthful obsession with the alchemists, Frankenstein is subsequently addicted to lighting, and then with chemistry. By the early pages of Volume I Frankenstein has discovered, in his own word, "the cause of the generation of life; nay more, I became myself capable of bestowing animation upon lifeless matter"^{[1]38} Hereinafter, Frankenstein totally deserts the concept of generation of life and leaves behind a natural process of biological evolution.

As the novel gradually unfolds, what Frankenstein's monster so fittingly displays are potentially disjointed body parts, which is absolutely not aesthetically pleasant but the parts work to form a whole, a strong physical body that violates standard medical practice concerning organ rejection. Even with the biotechnological advances at present, human cloning, organ transplant, body enhancement, prosthetic devices are applied in the medical field, the stitching practice of patching organs revealed in *Frankenstein* totally is turned away from saving life in medicine and

even creating life in nature.

The monster is the product of science and technology manipulated by man in the Industrial Age. The creator, Frankenstein is a representative of crazy scientists who apply his specialized knowledge for morally reprehensible purpose. However, When he thinks that a new species would bless him as the father, Frankenstein cannot restrain his inner excitement.

A new species would bless me as its creator and source; many happy and excellent natures would owe their being to me. No father could claim the gratitude of his child so completely as I should deserve theirs. ^{[1]39}

From the text above, it can be seen that Frankenstein extends his profane hand to the sacred realm of nature in order to satisfy his vanity of creating a new human. He is driven to create life by a desire to play God and be “father” to a “new species”. The act of creation is an act of male hubris and a clear manifestation of anthropocentrism. One of the central ideas about feminist on Mary’s novel is Frankenstein’s usurpation of female reproductive power. The famous ecofeminist Anne K. Mellor believes that *Frankenstein* is “first and foremost a book about what happens when a man tries to procreate without a woman”.^[66] Mary Shelley also highly criticizes her male characters and their self-aggrandizing visions. As a consequence, Frankenstein is punished for his transgressions, which manifest his action is the violation of Nature’s Law.

Mary resurrects an ancient terror at human creation shifting away from women as earthly birth-mother and toward the alienated, hubristic masculinity embodied by that alchemist-turned-scientist Frankenstein. According to the ecofeminist theory, in the dominant patriarchal cultures, reality is divided according to gender, and a higher value is placed on those attributes associated with masculinity. Mary Shelley came of age in a time when Britain is immersed in its thriving and flourishing Industrial Age, which technology made come true and hence technology is labeled with the masculine elevated to a higher rank of being. Such a reality that Mary faced is masculine-mighty fantasy world, where men, by virtue of technology, like Frankenstein, can trample with whatever they desire. Thus women’s natural right of childbirth is mercilessly deprived by men. Such masculine mode of Man upon which the Industrial Age and the technology itself depend is strongly challenged by ecofeminism. What ecofeminists suggest is that “everything in nature has intrinsic value. A reverence for and empathy with, nature and all life(or spirituality”) is an essential element of the social transformation required.”^[67] To this end, men shouldn’t attempt to control or even trample with nonhuman nature, but should give its genuine reverence to the natural law.

3 Resistance of Women and Nature against the Patriarchal Society in *Frankenstein*

In 1974, Francoise d'Eaubonne in her foundational text *Le Féminisme ou la Mort*, introduces the idea of interconnections between women's oppression and nature's domination in an attempt to liberate women and nature from unjust subordination in the patriarchal society. Earlier writings of ecofeminists such as Susan Griffin in her book, *Women and Nature: The Roaring Inside Her* (1978), trace the biased treatment of women and nature in western history to depict the allied resistance of women and nature as a way out of the deconstruction of historical, cultural and social dominance of patriarchy and androcentrism. It strikes us as really impressed that even before the rise of ecofeminism, Mary Shelley in her book begins to attack oppression of women and nature and call for their joint emancipation from men's oppression and subordination through their unremitting resistance.

3.1 The Struggle of Women against Men's Domination

In Victoria Age, women struggle to survive under men's domination. Therefore, they have been looking forward to winning their own social status with their intelligence. Ecofeminism deems that if women want to liberate themselves, they must be united and take the initiative to struggle. They could not entirely depend on men to rescue them. Women need to separate themselves from men in their lives, often with no one to turn to except themselves and other women. In *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley educates women in the most fundamental ways against men's domination.

3.1.1 Subversion of the Masculine Voice

As the daughter of so renowned a feminist as Mary Wollstonecraft, Mary Shelley seemingly writes her first novel from the view of three men with only minimal attention to female characters. The structure of *Frankenstein* has been compared to a series of concentric narrative circles in which three men who narrate their autobiographies push women to the far edge, reducing them to passively serving as an audience for male stories. The stories of these three men, Walton, Frankenstein, and the Monster, construct the principal narrative layers and serve together as a triptych demonstrating different stages of human efforts but fail because of a shared contempt for women in the patriarchal society. But the feminist themes, especially women's resistance against the men's dominance are advanced after the advent of *Frankenstein*.

One of ecofeminists argues that the patriarchal society is under man's dominance in the speech domain, where women as the other speech participant are almost forced to keep silence. In *Frankenstein*, Mary empowers her male protagonists with direct voices to reflect cultural, social,

and historical reality. In this case, feminist liberation as well as ecological one couldn't happen if women's voice couldn't be heard amidst the chaos of the masculine voice. To achieve this end, what Mary Shelley endeavors to do is highlight the women's voice to penetrate the men's and thus eventually to be heard. Hence, the key to *Frankenstein* is not the dominant masculine voices but the ones of the women in the three autobiographies. In essence, by subverting the masculine voice, all three autobiographies are revised versions of women stories. In each of the stories the voice of victimized women resonates with changing economic circumstances, marriage customs, dissolution of their families, social prejudice, and powerlessness, as evidenced in the narration in *Frankenstein*.

At the beginning of Walton's narrative, a brief anecdote illustrates the gentle demeanor and kindness of the master of the trip. He explains as follows.

“I heard of him first... from a lady who owes to him the happiness of her life... Some years ago he loved a young Russian lady of moderate fortune...the father of the girl consented to the match. He saw his mistress once... but she was bathed in tears... confessing at the same time that she loved another, but that he was poor, and that her father would never consent to the union. My generous friend reassured the suppliant, and on being informed of the name of her lover, instantly abandoned his pursuit... he bestowed the whole on his rival, together with the remains of his prize-money to purchase stock, and then himself solicited the young woman's father to consent to her marriage with her lover... “What a noble fellow!” .^{[1]6}

The story of the master is from a Russian woman involved in the love triangle, and her mother is not mentioned. Therefore, like other characters in the novel, she might have only one parent—a father. Her father regards her as a commodity and arranges her marriage without her permission. If the master did not respond to her when she cried, she would have no choice but to comply with the arranged marriage. In fact, the master represents a power fighting for women thereby fighting against male with chauvinism like her father. The master donates his property to her, speaks on her behalf to her father, and then withdraws from the society of women to join Walton's voyage north. Although the Russian woman's fate isn't entirely her own choice, compared with the other women in the novel, she seems to be the happiest woman. Here, what Mary Shelley attempts to express is that, unless men listen to and respect the requests of women, marriages will victimize women.

Achieving the ecofeminist goal of harmonious coexistence, women must rise to their feet and bravely confront the biased treatment and resist against it. The first step women are supposed to do is not expecting men's realization of their mistakes, but, first and foremost, making their voice resonating around the patriarchal world.

3.1.2 Rejection of Groundless Stigma

In *Frankenstein*, the performances of Elizabeth and Justine during the trial scene become

Mary's vehicle for illuminating women's rejection of groundless stigma imposed on them by the patriarchal society. Mary's painstaking treatment details in these scenes, even to the point of telling us where Frankenstein stands as he listens in a room, enable us to consider what really happens in the marginalized space of women's resistance-rejection of groundless stigma.

While taking a close reading of Justine's trial scenes, we might easily find the rejecting undercurrent flowing in the bodies of Elizabeth and Justine. First, Elizabeth, on the witness stand, tries to convince the jury of Justine's innocence with her testimony. Far from passive, Elizabeth boldly articulates her frustration and anger toward the injustice of patriarchal constructs implied by the behaviors of the clergy, the jury and, although she does not realize it, her fiancé. Justine publicly acknowledges herself a victim of circumstance but opens the door to her punishment.

I know ... how heavily and fatally this one circumstance weighs against me, but I have no power of explaining it... I commit my cause to the justice of my judges, yet I see no room for hope.^{[1]69}

Later, when Justine was brought to trial, she valiantly defies the presumed or groundless accusation but in vain. What Mary tries to tell us through the trial scene is the groundless stigma is, in essence, the gender and class biases that determine and contextualize Elizabeth and Justine's responses. As the privileged interpreter, Frankenstein demonstrates a limited understanding of women's resistance towards the eventual reconciliation.

What happens between Justine's condemnation and death may be the most important scene involving women in the novel. Elizabeth's initial reaction to Justine's formal "confession" and the outcomes of their exchange in Justine's cell demonstrate the rebuilding of a shattered female community by shaking off the shackle of being scapegoats.

At the end of the trial, Elizabeth's testimony falls on deaf ears. Justine is sentenced to death. In dying as a martyr, Justine battle clearly wins a psychological and spirit over Frankenstein, a battle where women win over men by rejecting the stereotype stigma on them. Justine's resistance is in line with Mary Shelley's notion of true woman, who is not voiceless and passive but active in struggling for the harmonious coexistence with man.

As the text discusses above, Frankenstein's creature frames Justine for the death of William. Justine is the only character to go through a full trial and sentencing and what she experiences in the process of sentencing shows the real man's justice system. This part, directly, depicts the unfair society in which women are obedient. Also, in the process of trial, the investigators take Justine's physical behaviors to be signs of guilt rather than consider it could be grief. In addition, they also consider her confusion as a sign of guilt rather than a sign of innocence. When facing an unfair accusation, an innocent individual, in modern society, must tend to argue on the basis of reason. However, under entrenched patriarchal thoughts, masculinists hold a stereotype that women's argument for justice based on reason is a wrong way and women should accept men's control. They consider that the instinctive actions out of control which Justine did are acquiescence of

crimes, and what a righteous citizen should not fear anything because she or he has nothing to hide. Although Justine is sentenced to death, she and Elizabeth still bravely endeavor to fight for her reputation, refusing the groundless stigma. It can be seen as the awakening of women and struggling against the patriarchal society.

3.1.3 Realization of Subjectivity in the Gender Relationship

In *Frankenstein*, most of careers are occupied by men, such as scientists, explorers, college students. Women are largely confined to the private space. But for Safie, she flees her treacherous father in Turkey in order to be with her lover, Felix De Lacey, in Germany. Hence, Safie appears to be a model for women to realize the subjectivity in the gender relationship.

Safie is a rebellious girl. Her pursuit of lover suggests the firmness of mind that Safie owns. Compared with other female characters, Mary describes Safie as the only successful female because she fights for her fate without any hesitation, which may break the stereotype of females. She has made up her mind to fight against her father at the beginning. To some extent, Safie bears her mother's words in her mind. Her mother is a Christian Arab and "instructs her daughter to believe in her own religious beliefs and makes her become female believers who yearn for Muhammad to pursue wisdom and spiritual independence."^{[1]107} Therefore, Safie has been accustomed to bold ideas and pursuit of sublime virtue. "The prospect of marrying a Christian and of staying in a country where women are able to gain status in society fascinates her."^{[1]108}

In a patriarchal society, men are considered as the center and women are exchanged as commodities, which indicates the inequality status of men and women. Safie's father arranges her marriage and breaks the promise for benefits. However, under the influence of her mother, Safie attempts to break the hierarchical system and lives in a society where women have their own privacy, instead of passively accepting her father's arrangement. However, Safie bravely pursues her own happiness. Mary, the author, depicted Safie's image as a woman possessing equal love. Safie makes her dream come true when she finds her true lover Felix. To Safie, women and men should be equal and can be harmonious together. In this sense, the awakening of women is the way to liberate them from the control of patriarchal society and achieves their dream. Only in this way can the subjectivity of female be realized in the gender relationship. This trend of thought is similar to that of Woolf who believed when genders are harmonious spiritually, they will be in a comfortable state.^[68]

To sum up, Mary encouraged women to embrace the world. They should learn to explore the surrounding instead of escaping from it. Women should not save themselves with the assistance of men. Rather, women are supposed to learn to protect themselves from unscrupulous people. Mary tries to teach new generations of women around the world to maintain their independence in spite of plenty of obstacles.

3.2 The Revenge of Nature against Men's Exploitation

Whereas the ancient Prometheus is famously punished for stealing fire from the gods and sentenced to have his live repeatedly eaten away for an indefinite period, the Modern Prometheus Frankenstein creates a being that viciously overpowers him. Therefore, instead of creating a subservient species, Frankenstein confronts a revolting insurrection of his own creating-a creature who refuses slavery, claims mastery over his creator and demands a female companion. Following the etymological roots of the word monster (*monstrum*) as to “warn, to demonstrate or to show, Mary’s *Frankenstein*, or *The Modern Prometheus* is, on one hand, an archetypical warning against the potential that nature would revenge if men’s exploitation over nature exceeds the bounds.

3.2.1 Vengeance of the Monster

The monster created by Frankenstein has ugly appearance, and it is the stitching practice of patching organs. At the beginning of the story, it was an innocent creature. Specifically speaking, it desired for natural beauty, appreciation of literary works, human companionship, and sympathy to the poor. However, Frankenstein’s abandonment leads up to a murderous and vindictive monster. After being abandoned, the creature has to rove without direction. Wherever it went, the creature was inevitably attacked and abused, and was named after “monster” because of its appearance. Gradually, he became disappointed, frustrated, and detested his creator, Frankenstein, as well as the other humans who abandoned and alienated it. The creature determined to revenge for its creator. It murders his creator’s family successively and commits suicide when its creator chases it for revenging. And finally, Frankenstein dies of illness.

In fact, the monster is the violation of Nature’s Law. When the monster meets its creator Frankenstein, it shouts to him, “Remember that I am your creation. I should be your Adam, but I become the fallen angel, and I was expelled from the paradise by you innocently.”^{[1]84} The monster considers itself as the Adam of Frankenstein. However, in essence, it is Eve of Frankenstein, because the monster seems as an appendage controlled by Frankenstein. Under the circumstance of oppression, the monster started to revenge. It killed Frankenstein’s family members and imputed the crimes to Justine and Frankenstein. Because of violation of Nature’s Law, Frankenstein’s family got stuck in revenge. It can be seen as the resistance of nature. Assume that, if Frankenstein did not break Nature’s Law, his family members might not be killed, and they may be safe.

Moyan considers that human’s desire is the destructive force as to nature.^[69] Even if desire is the driving force of social development, once it is excessive, it will immediately slip into the opposite side. It is Frankenstein’s desire about the exploitation of nature that destroys himself in the end. The absolute power of humans controlling over animals and the desire to conquer nature embodies of anthropocentrism, which naturally ignores the intrinsic value of other existences in nature except humans.

William H. Murdy, a well-known American eco-ethics scholar, also puts forward the

viewpoints that “people should not consider themselves as the most valuable existence in the world” and “other existences in nature also have intrinsic value”. At the start of the monster’s creation, it loved the world. Just like what Mary Shelley describes, the monster covers its body with leaves, feeds on berries, and is kind-hearted and helpful. But the people’s misunderstanding as well as creator’s abandonment make it lose heart. As a result, the artificial monster degenerates into an angry avenger, until it finally commits suicide. Therefore, this transformation of the monster is closely related to what Frankenstein do, and the suffering of monsters mainly comes from the creator. The monster is originally kind and warm-hearted, but it is misfortune that makes him a devil. What Mary Shelley wants to express is her disgust to the ugly patriarchy in the prosperous world. The self-destruction of the monster is actually the destruction of ugly humanity and the entire industrial civilization. Hence, the destruction reflects the human aggression against the ecological environment and the oppression of women under the influence of anthropocentrism and patriarchy. People always adhere to the principle of egoism to control and conquer nature, but in the end they have to bear the devastating consequences of destroying nature.

3.2.2 Menace of Arctic Environment

The harsh environment with extreme weather, especially the ice and snow frozen land, depicted in many literary world like *The Snows of Kilimanjaro* by Earnest Hemingway, *The Call of wild* by Jack London, and many others, highlights the human strong willpower against the indifferent and ruthless nature. Nevertheless, Mary Shelley’s presentation of the arctic environment in *Frankenstein* transgresses such a common practice in literary creation by mirroring the revenge of nature through the menace of the arctic environment. By doing it, Mary reveals the combination of her feminist and ecological concerns, which is one of the crucial insights of ecofeminism that against the anthropocentrism and androcentrism women’s struggle and nature’s revenge must go hand in hand.

Mary Shelley spent several years to finish the novel. The plots are organized with many changes of scenes, the specific settings of which include Geneva, the Swiss Alps, the University of Ingolstadt, England, northern Scotland, and the North Pole. Among those scenes, the far North Pole becomes the setting in *Frankenstein*’s opening and closing parts, which is of great significance for understanding the evolution of the novel into its final complex form concerning the menace of the North Pole. In the novel, that, men like Walton attempt to improve the world, seems to be a good idea, but in essence, it is a foolishly arrogant thought because it is selfishly for their ambition rather than for benefit humans.

The opening paragraphs comment on the weather. Walton, a polar-explorer, writes down that, “as I walk in the streets of Petersburg, I feel a cold northern breeze play upon my cheeks, which braces my nerves and fills me with delight... This breeze, which has travelled from the regions towards which I am advancing, gives me a foretaste of those icy climes.”^[1] The Arctic wind he describes is one of the possible contributors for the “Year without a Summer”, and is the vehicle by which polar cold is transmitted to British shores. However, Walton names this “foretaste of... icy

climes"... and a "wind of promise"^{[1]1}, and these expressions can be seen as the poetic descriptions via language, in which the potential dangers of Arctic winds are shown.

During the voyage to North Pole, Walton encounters extreme weather and often traps in dangerous situations. He endures "cold, famine, thirst, and want of sleep".^{[1]3} When the life of a man in the boat is at stake, he does not give up easily. "Why not continue discussing this unconstrained but obedient element? What can stop a person's firm heart and firm will?"^{[1]9}

It can be seen that, in his mindset, nature is unrestrained, but at the same time nature is tamable and docile. This shows anthropocentrism. According to anthropocentrism, human beings are the center of the biosphere and have intrinsic value. Human beings are the source of value and the measure of all values. Its moral status is superior to all other existing entities.

In addition, Frankenstein's arrangement of returning home from university is delayed by a harsh winter and an "uncommonly late" ^{[1]50} spring; elsewhere in Europe, the monster observes "the heart-moving indications of impending famine" ^{[1]90} in his beloved cottages. Frankenstein's creature haunts glaciers in polar regions, and considers himself as "a blot upon the earth, from which all men fled and whom all men disowned".^{[1]104} It always emerges at the crucial moment to remind Frankenstein of the consequences of his actions.

The weather in the novel reflects the emotional states of Frankenstein and the monster. When the monster desires for human's acceptance, it forgets that it is the "bleak, damp, and unwholesome" environment that accepts its "birth", thus the darkness of winter, rather than the greenery of spring, predicts its failure of communication with the cottagers^{[1]92}. When it is rejected by the De Laceys, the monster flies straight into the arms of winter: "Nature decayed around me, and the sun became heatless; rain and snow poured around me; mighty rivers were frozen; the surface of the earth was hard, and chill, and bare, and I found no shelter" ^{[1]114}. Given the monster's emotional state, its perception of the world dominated by the apparently cruel winters cannot depend on an accurate observation. While *Frankenstein* depicts the ominous weather-signs in 1816, in other words, the novel also draws attention to the Arctic winds.

Mary Shelley's novel derives from the North Pole from beginning to end. Walton explores the North Pole in order to achieve his dreams that he has conceived from reading books about polar expeditions when he was a child. Frankenstein pursues the monster who flees to the far north in order to escape the cruelty of human beings and lure the unfaithful creators to a cold place. The writer's description of polar environment indicates the catastrophic consequences of human's arrogance, irresponsibility, and interference with the natural world.

4 Pursuit of the Ecological Vision in *Frankenstein*

The ecofeminist Gaard proposes that life on earth is a network of interconnections, not a hierarchy.^[70] Nature should be the partner on which mankind depends for survival. The relationship between mankind and other lives should not be a hierarchical pyramid, but an ecological circle where all beings are equal. In *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley demonstrates her ecological visions as the harmonious coexistence between men and women as well as the harmonious coexistence between human and nature.

4.1 The Harmonious Coexistence between Men and Women

According to Ecofeminists, women and nature are victims in the patriarchal society, and they are subordinated to men and human respectively. With the aim of changing the subordinated status, women endeavour to break the obstacle of gender inequality, and attempt to explore reconciliation between men and women. In *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley expresses her great sympathy and concern for women's destiny and tries to establish a harmonious relationship between men and women.

4.1.1 Marriage-bonded Harmony

In the novel, the harmonious relationship between men and women can be manifested as the marriage-bonded harmony. The first example is the transformation of Frankenstein's attitude towards Elizabeth. In the *Bible*, Adam and Eve live in harmony at the beginning, which are similar to the earlier relationships between Frankenstein and Elizabeth. As is mentioned before, in the very beginning of their acquaintance, Elizabeth is adopted by Frankenstein's family and is regarded as a present for Frankenstein. Even so, they are brought up together and they are still in company with each other in their happy childhood. At that time, their relationship is harmonious. "We grew up together; our ages were not quite a year difference. I need not to say that we were no strangers to any form of division or dispute. Harmony was the soul of our relation, and the diversity and contrast in our characters bring us closer."^{[1]23}

Before her death, Caroline, the mother of Elizabeth and Frankenstein, has arranged their marriage expectantly. However, Frankenstein postpones the marriage constantly and neglects the feelings of Elizabeth only for his scientific experiments. Obviously, Frankenstein is a crazy scientist, who considers Elizabeth as his private possession at first, and he protects, loves and cherishes her at that time. However, after Elizabeth expresses her desire for his love in letters, Frankenstein, ultimately, admits the importance of Elizabeth's company in his life. It is Elizabeth that can soften his emotions and enable him to dare to "whisper paradisiacal dreams of love and joy."^{[1]170} Therefore, he writes to Elizabeth and says "On earth, we have almost no happiness; but maybe the most enjoyable thing is that I could centre you."^{[1]170}

It could be found that Frankenstein's decision of returning home and marrying his fiancée Elizabeth indicates that Frankenstein begins to realize that he should respect Elizabeth's will and fulfill the promise he once made. It also suggest that the equality between male and female goes into his consciousness. At the same time, it implies the harmonious relationship between men and women returns to the original state. Ecofeminism believes that the relationship between men and women should not be opposed but complementary. Men and women depend on each other and women should be equal to men.

The second example can be seen from the monster's desire for a female companionship, which is also indicative of the harmonious relationship between man and woman. After murdering William out of rage, the monster sees the necklace's portrait at which a lovely woman is drawn. "In spite of my malignity, it softened and attracted me. For a few moments I gazed with delight on her dark eyes, fringed by deep lashes, and her lovely lips"^{[1]125}. Staring at the portrait, the monster generates an idea of having the woman as its companionship. It longs for comforts and affection. The creature shows desire for a woman which is different from Frankenstein's ambition. The monster explains to its creator.

What I ask of you is reasonable and moderate. I demand a creature of another sex, but as hideous as myself; the gratification is small, but it is all that I can receive, and it shall content me. It is true, we shall be monsters, cut off from all the world; but on that account we shall be more attached to another. ^{[1]128}

Compared with Frankenstein's intention to have companionship being private possession, the monster's purpose of wanting a mate is to wish a company. Its desires originates from solitude, instead of finding other creatures praising it. The monster has experienced human emotions and has understand the power of life. It falls in love with society and longs for a lover. Although it is monstrous in physical appearance, the monster is still a so-called man just like anyone else because it is endowed with compassion. Thus it is also a "spiritual and lustful creature". The monster continues expressing its wishes: "our lives will not be happy, but they will become harmless and get rid of the suffering I feel now...make me happy; let me be grateful for your gratitude! Let me see that I feel sympathy for something that already exists. Don't refuse me my request!" ^{[1]128}

Compared with Frankenstein, the monster shows its humility by which it expresses its wish to have a companion. Here, the monster is also a spokesman for female, which appeals to respect for women and advocates the equal status between female and male. In *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley expresses her experience and feelings via heroes in the novel, such as the monster. Contemporary feminist critics Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar interpret it as the female "Anxiety of Authorship", that is, to conceal the female writers' gender identity in a patriarchal society.^[11] Incompatible with the single-sex in the literature field, female writers have to use attachments to express their experiences in their works. The act of adopting male identity and language reflects Mary's actual situation of being suppressed and isolated. That is the reason why Mary's monster can be attached

to and resonate with the spirit of her own existence in the same situation. The fate of the monster is not only the epitome of the fate of all natural animals and plants in the status of “others” at that time, but also corresponds to the dilemma that Mary Shelley has been isolated by the patriarchal society. Because of the same situation with the monster, Mary Shelley expresses her understanding of the monster and looks forward to building a harmonious relationship between men and women. What ecofeminists declare is that there is no superior gender, everyone should be equal in the world.

4.1.2 Kinship-bonded Harmony

In *Frankenstein*, the harmonious relationship between men and women also can be shown by the kinship-bonded harmony. Percy Bysshe Shelley believes that the chief concern of the novel is to exhibit “the amiableness of domestic affection and excellence of universal virtue”. Two families, the Frankenstein family and the De Lacey family, are described as perfect examples of domestic love and harmony.

The first example is the Frankenstein family. As Frankenstein recollects, no one can have had a happier childhood than his for his parents are indulgent and his siblings are amiable. Moreover, they are “strangers to any species of disunion and dispute”^{[1]20}. Frankenstein’s mother adopts his cousin Elizabeth and regards her as his future bride “to bind as closely as possible the ties of domestic love”^{[1]20}. Within this tightly connected inner circle, Frankenstein’s family members teach, nurse, and entertain mutually. Mary Shelley depicts a picture of love and tranquility with a kinship-bonded harmony.

The De Lacey family is also depicted as a domestic ideal in which the youngsters perform “every little affection and duty with gentleness” to their father, who rewards these youngsters “by benevolent smiles”.^{[1]76} According to the description of the monster, the father is De Lacey, and he has a son called Felix and a daughter called Agatha. They have been in France for many years in affluence. But Safie’s father, a Turkish merchant, leads the family into a miserable life. The Turk is arrested and sentenced to death for the fabricated crime. Out of righteousness, Felix vows to rescue to him. In return, the Turk allows her daughter to marry with Felix. However, when the Turk is rescued successfully and hears the family of De Lacey is not only deprived of fortune but exiled abroad, he regrets and tells Safie to forget Felix. Later, the life of De Lacey’s family is tough.

However, in the eye of the monster, the De Lacey family is worth admiring. The atmosphere between the man and woman is harmonious and attractive. When the young girl Agatha walks with a pail on her head, a young man Felix meets her and “take[s] the pail from her head.”^{[1]92} And the young man again takes “some tools in his hand, he walked across the field of the hut; the girl was also very busy, sometimes in the house, sometimes in the yard... The young girl was busy tidying the hut... the old man picked up the instrument, began to play, and produced a sound sweeter than that of thrush and nightingale.”^{[1]92}

Here, Shelley depicts a harmonious family to us. Young men and young women carry out their own duties and they help and care for each other. By depicting the warm atmosphere of De Lacey’s

family, Mary Shelley wants to demonstrate coexistence between man and woman. Only when man and woman respect each other can they perform their respective functions in building a truly harmonious society which is friendly and tranquil.

4.2 The Harmonious Coexistence between Human and Nature

With the rapid development of the industrial revolution, a variety of new things emerge. At the same time, people have unprecedented enthusiasm for science and technology, overestimate the power of science and technology, and hope that technology can change everything. The rapid development of science and technology has also caused unprecedented destruction of surroundings. The conflict between nature and city has inevitably been aggravated. Therefore, human beings have had to confront a series of environmental issues, such as water pollution, plastic pollution, sandstorms, haze, etc. These serious situations force humans to reconsider and revalue the relationship between human and nature. Just as some ecofeminists consider, humans should love, respect and cooperate with nature instead of controlling or dominating nature. Therefore, ecofeminists call on people to rethink human's role in nature and hope to establish a harmonious and stable world. The novel *Frankenstein* manifests some great inspirations. To build a harmonious world, it is of significance to build up a harmonious relationship between human and nature. To some extent, a good environment should be a place where the relationship between human and nature is harmonious.

In *Frankenstein*, nature generously provides nourishment and shelter to all creatures, and soothes the injured souls by the power of treatment. Meanwhile, the healed humans begin to think about their responsibility for nature.

4.2.1 The Healing Power of Nature over Human

According to Wordsworth, nature has some power that can soothe our hearts, meanwhile nature can impress people with tranquility and beauty, and can guide us from joy to joy. The most ordinary flowers can also give people deep thoughts. Daisies can teach people not to lose hope in times of difficulty, and daffodils can heal the wounds of the soul and bring the lonely one into heaven. The ancient Greek philosopher Socrates said that the country and the trees can't teach me anything, but the people in the city can teach me a lot. However, the romantic writers such as Wordsworth take the opposite view that nature is the "nanny of the soul, guide and guard" of human beings. Therefore, people should always be the humble students of nature, always be the "worshippers of nature, come here to worship with spirit", and always learn from nature who is the most profound teacher on earth.^[71]

In the novel, the characters who can appreciate the beauties of nature are rewarded by nature physically and mentally. From the previous discussion, it can be seen that women are close to nature and they get some support as well as comfort from nature. Caroline seeks the healing power of nature physically and mentally for recovery. And Elizabeth also busies herself with the majestic

and wondrous scenes for admiration and delight after dealing with a series of trivial matters. In addition to women returning to nature and getting pleasure in nature, men and other creatures also gain vitality and strength from nature. For example, when Frankenstein deeply engrosses himself into the crazy occupation, “The summer months has been over. It is the most beautiful season. We have never seen such a harvest and vintage. His eyes are not sensitive to the charm of nature. The same feeling makes him ignore the surrounding scenes, makes him forget to eat, even forgetting those friends who are far away from him and haven’t seen them in a long time.”^{[1]40}

However, when Frankenstein gets sick and longs for recovers, he decides to wander in the nature with his friend Clerval by which he gains additional strength from the salubrious air. Furthermore, he loves the nature again, finds out the meaning of life and cheers himself up. This beautiful environment makes Frankenstein and Clerval get closer.

I became the same happy creature who, ...loved and beloved by all, had no sorrow or care. When most happy, inanimate nature had the power of bestowing on me the delightful sensations. A serene sky and verdant fields filled me with serene ecstasy. ^{[1]55}

Different from Frankenstein pursuing natural science, Clerval is obsessed with literature. He is interested in the Oriental languages, turns his eyes towards the East, and determines to engage in glorious careers. For some western people, the East represents a relatively mysterious and primitive world, as opposed to the rational Western world. Westerners believe that the life of the Easterners are more natural and simple, and they are close to the life of the early humans. To some extent, Clerval’s intimate relation with nature influences Frankenstein invisibly.

The quietness and peacefulness of nature can always bring a peaceful mind to the people close to it, as indicated in the case of Frankenstein’s journey home. When he receives a letter from his father, telling him the news of the death of his young brother William, he feels desperate and decides to return home. The closer to his home, the more apprehensive he feels, and in this painful state of mind, he stays in Lausanne for two days. He “gazes at the lake; the water is calm, the surroundings are calm, the snow-capped mountains, the “natural palace” has not changed. “The calm and heavenly scene restored me to a certain extent, and I continued my journey to Geneva.”^{[1]60} With his native town coming into his sight, he discovers the mountains of Jura and Mont Blanc. The “summits are clear; the sky are blue and placid”^{[1]60} The majestic scenery of nature comforts him like a mother, eases his sorrow and puts him in tranquility once more. It is in tranquility that he begins to reflect on his previous behavior and anticipate his future fate.

Wrongly accused of murdering William, Justine dies as a scapegoat. Despair and regret weigh heavily on Frankenstein’s heart, and after a series of consecutive events, nothing could be eliminated. He is seized by remorse and guilty, which plunges him into a kind of cruel torture hell. This mental state deteriorates his bad health, which still suffers from the first blow of his brother’s death. Shrouded in disillusion, he comes to Alpine valleys near his home, and “sought tranquility in the magnificence and the eternity of such scenes” ^{[1]78} in order to forget himself and his

ephemeral sorrows. “When I jumped into the depths of the Arve Canyon, the mental burden was significantly reduced. The huge mountains and cliffs hanging on all sides of me, the sound of the river raging among the rocks, the impulse of the surrounding waterfalls speaks of an omnipotent powerful force, and I am not afraid or bent in front of anyone who is not so versatile. The elements of creation and dominance are displayed here in their most terrifying guise.” [1]79 During the journey to seek comfort, nature, as always, never fails him, giving him long-awaited spiritual comfort and a long-lost sense of pleasure.

Some turn in the road, some new object suddenly perceived and recognized, reminded me of days gone by, and were associated with the light-hearted gaiety of boyhood. The very winds whispered in soothing accents, and maternal nature bade me weep no more. [1]79

Through the description of the natural environment, Mary Shelley not only depicts the spiritual comfort of the hometown and family to Frankenstein, but also denies the ambition of human beings to objectify and transform nature, emphasizing the importance of returning to nature and calling on to stay away from unnecessary scientific inventions. By exploring and violating the laws of nature, Mary Shelley reviews her yearning for the traditional English pastoral life, which is a manifestation of her ecofeminist proposition.

Like Frankenstein, the monster can also get comfort from the nature, for nature is generous to all the living creatures on earth. Although the monster is abandoned by Frankenstein for its horrible appearance, nature embraces it and provides shelter for the monster regardless of its horrible appearance. Moreover, when it suffers hunger and cold in the dark, nature takes it over and provides it with food, water and shelter for survival. In addition, nature endows it with courage and strength to push forward. “It was noon when I woke up, and was illuminated by the bright sunlight on the white ground, I decided to start traveling again.” [1]90

When the monster first go into a village, it is attacked by human beings and refused by human society. Having been attacked by villagers, the monster is scrupulous to approach human beings until it meets the De Lacey family. After observing the family for a long time and mastering the language of humans, it is abiding by its time to communicate with them. However, as is unexpected, it escaped in anguish after being attacked again. As a consequence, it curses the creator and wants to take a revenge out of rage. However, when the sun rises, “the pleasant sunshine and fresh air restored me a certain degree of tranquility.” [1]119 Here, the bright sunshine and pure air in nature brings it in reconciliation with its previous painful experience. After calming down, the monster has an introspection on itself and decides to return to the cottage in order to make up for its imprudent actions. However, when it gets the news that Felix’s family decides to flee the village because of fear from it, it intends to project its fury into inanimate objects. Then, it begins to wander again and seek targets aimlessly.

... the day, which was one of the first of spring, cheered even me by the loveliness of its sunshine and the balminess of the air. I felt emotions of gentleness and pleasure, that had

long appeared dead, revive within me. ^{[1]123}

Miraculously, the natural scenery, with fragrant flowers and fresh air, frees it from harassment of solitude and deformity.

It opens its eyes to the blessed sun and expresses its gratitude for joys brought by the sun. The natural environment, such as the sun mentioned above, helps the monster to escape from the distressing reality temporarily. The nature with rejuvenating power can reconcile the once-disharmonious life rhythm of the individual's inner heart, and can regenerate the confused soul, and finally the two will merge and interact with each other to achieve the unity of nature and human.^[72] Nature opens her arms and comforts the monster, completing the transformation of its life.

From the above analysis, it can be seen that people are encouraged to get close to nature, integrate with nature and return to the most primitive authenticity, in that nature plays a great power in healing. It can also be seen that women placed on the same subordinate status as nature by men are also considered to have a certain ability of "healing" because of their close connection with nature. Ecofeminists argue that to deconstruct dualism humans have no alternative but to admit the fact that nature possesses consoling as well as healing power. In this regard, Mary Shelley's description of nature elaborates such core value of ecofeminism that human and nature are interdependent upon each other in an interwoven world.

4.2.2 The Ecological Responsibility of Human over Nature

Some of contemporary human beings can be understood as the representatives of *Frankenstein*, for they have shown a comparable inability and unwillingness to accept responsibility for the noxious effects of science and technology on natural ecology. However, in *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley has cautioned human's ecological responsibility over nature.

As is illustrated above, behind Victor's motivation of his scientific discovery is the masculine psychosexual dynamics, which pushes him to venture into "unhallowed damp of the grave". Like the tortured animals, the dead cannot give their content in some form of retaliation like the monster's revenge. By his intrusion and subsequent manipulation of dead bodies, *Frankenstein* disturbs the natural ecological cycle as he usurps the domination of natural reproduction process in order to create life, for the aftermath of which human must take their ecological responsibility.

Mary Shelley affords her concern about the scientific rationality via *Frankenstein's* narrative for he is capable of unprecedented discoveries by technical means. This concern is of great significance for the contemporary world. Just as *Frankenstein* who is reluctant to accept the ethical consequences and responsibilities for his action of creating a monster with dead limbs and tissue, people in modern world are universally reluctant to accept the ethical consequences of techno-scientific creation. Although the products of techno-science may not have a humanoid form, like *Frankenstein's* creature, they still have many detrimental effects for the environment if their creators do not take responsibilities. For example, nowadays, the global warming is affected by

large amounts of carbon emissions, which is caused by motor cars. Therefore, if humans are not willing to assume their ethical responsibilities for what they create, these creations of techno-science are more monstrous or even more dangerous than Frankenstein's creature.

Mary Shelley did not deny the significance of science and technology, but remind human that blind development of technology and industrialization spurred by the appetite for profit is dangerous for natural environment. Human should have the greatest respect for nature's intrinsic value and creativity instead of confrontation with nature.

Compared with Frankenstein's family whose experiences are tragic, De Lacey's family is lucky because of their maintenance of the harmony between human and nature. No matter what kind of circumstance are, their respect for nature also can be found. After the family falls into a state of utter poverty and has to live in a cottage, De Lacey's family members refuse to plunder nature.

In the midst of poverty and want, Felix carried with pleasure to his sister the first little white flower that peeped out from beneath the snowy ground. Early in the morning, before she had risen, he cleared away the snow that obstructed her path to the milk-house, drew water from the well, and brought the wood from the out-house.^{[1]96}

Several new kinds of plants sprang up in the garden, which they dressed; and these signs of comfort increased daily as the season advanced.^{[1]98}

In accordance with the surroundings of De Lacey's family, man and nature are harmonious. All of surroundings create warm and harmonious atmosphere. Moreover, they express their gratitude for nature's nurture, unlike those, immorally, who take it for granted and plunder resources from nature. Felix and Agatha, De Lacey's children, do not seek fame and fortune. Even when they are in plight of poverty, they still have no complaints about life. Despite the lack of money, they still have a peaceful life.

Moreover, the De Lacey's family lives a pure and warm-hearted spiritual life. By contrast, the final tragic fate of Frankenstein family suggests that when the desire for material conquest replaces spiritual pursuit, a terrible purgatory of alienation of human nature, loss of morality, and ecological imbalance will inevitably occur. Through the contrast of different fates between De Lacey's family and Frankenstein's family, Mary Shelley reveals that the development of modern science and technology as well as the evolution of material civilization must abide by Nature's Laws. Meanwhile, she opposes that human beings centered on self-development, ignoring the natural organic order and unrestrained plunder of nature. She pays more attention to the healthy development of the human spirit and the humanistic care for the natural environment.

Apart from the De Lacey's family, the transformation of Walton's attitude towards nature from conquest to respect shows another reconciliation between nature and human beings. Mary Shelley tends to convey to us a thought that human beings should have self-discipline and comply with the Law of Nature. The key to harmonious relationship between man and nature is to change

human's behaviors.

As is mentioned before, Walton is an ambitious explorer. In fact he wants to achieve his fame in the name of scientific expedition. During his voyage to North Pole, he and other sailors overcome lots of difficulties and are threatened by growing crisis. The ice of arctic wasteland is exceedingly dangerous. However, Walton's desire for fame and fortune motivates him to ignore the potential risk and only focus on the benefit. Later, even if he notices dangers of the arctic, Walton expresses his ambition to nature in letters to his sister.

I may there discover the wondrous power which attracts the needle; and may regulate a thousand celestial observations, that require only this voyage to render their seeming eccentricities consistent for ever. I shall satiate my ardent curiosity with the sight of a part of the world never before visited. ^[1]

From his explanation, it can be seen that Walton is attracted by the beauty and danger of the sublime nature. Moreover, when he witnesses the power of nature, he feels awed by its magnitude. Nevertheless, in his eyes, nature still can be conquered by human beings. The relationship between Walton and nature is inharmonious because Walton is deeply influenced by anthropocentrism. According to anthropocentrism, the value of natural environment is measured by its impacts on humans^[73], and human beings are the most important species and the core on the earth, and the value of nature depends on human perspectives and whether it is beneficial to human. Anthropocentrism can be understood as human supremacy, which is generally regarded as the root of the conflict between humans and nature.^[42]

There are commonalities between Frankenstein and Walton. Both of them are obsessed with exploring and conquering nature. Only when the nature is beneficial to them can they appreciate the beauty of nature. Eventually, they must learn that the beauty of nature is covered with plenty of dangers. The beauty of nature is best considered as an umbrella to prevent from abuse; it can protect itself instead of being an object to be consumed.^[62]

However, different from Frankenstein's tragic fate, Walton's destiny is better because of his changes. They encountered on the way to the north pole. After realizing Walton's ambitious plan of exploring North Pole, Frankenstein can not stopping telling his stories to Walton. Because he believes that Walton's voyage to the North Pole is dangerous. He hopes Walton can learn the lessons from him and can enjoy tranquility rather than ambition. "Seek happiness in tranquility and avoid ambition, even if this is just a different appearance in science and discovery! It is obviously only one of the innocent people." ^{[1]197}

Frankenstein keeps confessing to Walton and warning him not to follow in his steps. After the hesitation and affirmation, Walton finally decides to take responsibility for his sailors and makes a return voyage. Therefore, he writes in the letter to his sister: "thus there are my hopes blasted by cowardice and indecision; I come back ignorant and disappointed."^{[1]195} Here, Walton's attitude has an obvious change. Although he is ambitious for conquering anything, he still has an introspection

and hopes to control his own desire. In this sense, what he does stands for his respect for nature and he would like to become a person who complies with the laws of nature.

Therefore, the conflicts between human and nature can be reconciled and both of them return to its original harmony. This is related to ecofeminism thoughts, that is, nature is not static, but dynamic; it is not the object deprived by humans, but a living planet shared with humans. From the perspective of the relationship between human and nature, human is neither the center, nor can it be the center. In essence, human and nature are in equal position, just as men and women being in an equal position.^{[60]217} Mary Shelley expresses her hope for an egalitarian relationship among all creatures. As long as people change their stereotype and have a reverence for others, the conflicts between human and nature could be reconciled and the relationship will be more harmonious.

From the above analysis, it can be found that human beings get resources from nature and depend on nature. Therefore, all creatures should have lived in a harmonious planet, which is Mary's ecological consciousness. In another word, the whole ecosystems must maintain diversity.^[74] Shelley firmly believes that the relationship between human and nature is a circle, not a hierarchy. Meanwhile, she stresses human's ecological responsibility for nature. Only by learning to live in harmony with nature can human possess more and be happier in the future.

5 Conclusion

The story of land where man live at peace with women and with the natural world is Mary Shelley's recurrent ecological vision underlying in her *Frankenstein*. This is a land where there is no hierarchy, among humans or between humans and nature, where people care for each other and for nature, where our mother nature maintain their power and completeness, where the power of technology does not rule the earth, or at least that part of it is controlled by women.

To conceptualize such a vision of ecological feminism, Mary Shelley, in her feminist utopian work, reveals to us that if women as a group have an intent to escape the ancient patriarchal domination over them, first they themselves must realize and make men aware of their inborn unity with nature, with all other living creature, and among them with men. But to Mary Shelley there is more to it than that, and more to the connection of women and nature, women suffer their subordination in the unhealthy and unbalanced ecosystems and unsustainable and unsatisfying way of living on the earth. Thus, the subordinated women images like Elizabeth, Caroline and Justine are unfolded before readers, followed by the distorted nature like the violation of nature and the year without summer. Hereinafter, gender is at least a major part of the rooted cause of men's domination. But although Mary's ecological vision is so sane and so attractive, she seems to raise other problems. Is the goodness of women will save themselves and nature from man's oppression? Should only women with rebellious spirit as a group fight the battle against patriarchy in solitude? Can the resistance of both women and nature be the answer to the earth's destruction and to all the other related problems? Is it when the powerless take over the power that all problems in the patriarchal society will cease? Undoubtedly, Shelley, by constructing her ecological vision in *Frankenstein*, presents our modern world with a viable solution to all the problems.

First and foremost, Mary Shelley lays the foundation of her ecological/green vision by combining a romantic conception of both women and nature, the idea that women have special power and capacities of nurturance and affinity with nature. This, no doubt, is unshakable by men justifies their special treatment, which of course turns out to their inferior treatment. Then, having finished the foundation layer of her green vision. Mary heightens up her vision by giving positive value to the resistance of women and nature against inequality and inferiority. She validates a green version of the "good woman" argument of their gender equality and of the green nature free from men's exploitation. As such, good and moral women, who are nurturant, empathetic and life-oriented should reclaim their domain from the man-dominated as well as technology-oriented world. Lastly, what Mary finally does to her ecological vision of the future world is to seal it by constructing harmonious coexistence between male and female, and man and nature. Herein, the marriage-bonded harmony intertwined with the kinship-bonded one constitute the core of harmonious coexistence between men and women. Meanwhile, in constructing such a harmonious vision, she stresses the ecological responsibility of human over nature to dismantle hierarchical binary ecosystem.

The participants in the great dialogue of western culture, which extends now about some two and a half thousand years into the past, have been almost entirely male. Then in 1818 with the emerging of Mary Shelley's proto-science fiction novel, *Frankenstein*, women's voices began to make themselves heard for the first time in the SF field. With the development of human civilization, until today, the progress of women's equal rights in the world is far from satisfactory. Furthermore, ecological issues are still hot issues that we urgently need to pay attention to. Last year, the COVID-19 epidemic broke out and swept the world, which inevitably enables us to rethink the relationship between human and nature, the impact of human behaviors on the environment, and our attitude towards the environment. In this regard, Mary, more than 200 years ago, constructed her avantgarde vision of ecological feminism, which nevertheless sheds some light on our present harsh reality. What strike us as odd is that the etymological meaning of the "Prometheus" in the title is forethought. Nevertheless, on the second thought, it might give us a revelation that Mary Shelley's vision is the genuine forethought of how a modern world coexist harmoniously.

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